

THE ASYLUM

Quarterly Journal of the
Numismatic Bibliomania Society

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Spring 1999

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**"I've had it with these
cheap sons of bitches
who claim they love
coins but never buy
a book."**

With apologies to Kenneth Rexroth
whose specialty was poetry

NUMISMATIC BIBLIOMANIA SOCIETY OFFICERS

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Pittsburgh, PA 15206

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Cincinnati, OH 45232

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Joel Orosz, 4300 Old Field Trail, Kalamazoo, MI 49008
Scott Rubin, P.O. Box 6885, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648
Pete Smith, 2424 4th St. NE, #12, Minneapolis, MN 55418
Frank Van Zandt, 6032 Van Zandt Rd., Livonia, NY 14487

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Publication Editor: Marilyn Reback
P.O. Box 1110
Monument, CO 80132

Editor-in-Chief: Robert F. Metzger
P.O. Box 307
Lakeville, MN 55044-0307

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President's Message—by M.L. Sullivan

Welcome to Volume 17 of *The Asylum*. This is the premiere issue for our new editor-ship team of Marilyn Reback, publication editor, and Bob Metzger, editor-in-chief. We welcome them both to their new positions. Please find enclosed your 1999 dues renewal notice. Payment is required in order to receive the next issue of *The Asylum* scheduled for June.

Nominations: Officers and Board Trustees

In accordance with our bylaws, the next issue of *The Asylum* will include our biannual election ballot for President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer and six Trustees. Please send your officer and trustee nominations to Michael J. Sullivan, P.O. Box 32131, Cincinnati, OH 45232. Any person nominated for a position will be contacted in advance for acceptance prior to the balloting process. As a reminder to the membership, the following provides a description of the roles and responsibilities:

The President shall preside at all NBS club meetings and Board of Trustees meetings, and shall perform the duties usually associated with that office. All necessary committees shall be appointed by the President, with the approval of the Board of Trustees. The President shall also be responsible for making arrangements for the annual club meeting, customarily held at the annual American Numismatic Association (ANA) Convention.

The Vice President shall perform the duties of the President, in the absence of the latter. If the office of the President is vacant, the Vice President shall succeed to fill the office of President. The Vice President also is the program chairman at the annual club meeting and shall be in charge of preparing the annual awards of the society.

The Secretary-Treasurer shall preside over all financial and operational activities of the society, and shall perform the duties usually associated with that office. The Secretary-Treasurer shall collect all membership dues, advertising fees, back-issue sale proceeds, and other funds which may come to NBS. The Secretary-Treasurer will establish and maintain such bank accounts as needed for the society with the President as an alternative signer for all accounts and maintain all required accounting records of the society. Funds of the society may be disbursed by the Secretary-Treasurer as its business may require. If the Secretary-Treasurer questions the propriety of any disbursement, the matter may be submitted to the board of trustees for approval. The Secretary-Treasurer will render an annual accounting of all funds of the society to the Board of Trustees, customarily to coincide with the ANA Convention held each year.

The Secretary-Treasurer will maintain a list of members in good standing, submit an annual membership report to the Board of Trustees, handle the routine business and communication of the society, maintain a record of financial transactions, and notifications of dues payments and members in arrears. The back issue inventory of *The Asylum* will be held and sold via the Secretary-Treasurer at a price determined by the Board of Trustees. The Secretary-Treasurer or a person(s) selected by the Board of Trustees will coordinate and count the ballots from any NBS officer and trustee election or other designated membership voting processes, and provide a summary of results to the Board of Trustees.

Between the Covers

—by Colonel Bill Murray, NLG

Coin collectors often hear, “Buy a coin in the best condition you can afford.” Change the word “coin” to “book,” and you will have good advice for developing a collection of fine numismatic books ... assuming you want a fine collection. No doubt most members of the Numismatic Bibliomania Society have that as an aim—a collection of fine numismatic books.

Wait a minute, “fine?” Coin conditions—“Uncirculated or Mint State (11 different grades in MS!), and “Fine” ranks somewhere about the middle of the circulated coin grades. In the paragraph above, change the words “a collection of fine numismatic books” to “a collection of really nice books.” That should satisfy no one.

What about book conditions? Is there a grading system? Carter’s *ABC for Book Collectors*, 7th edition (1997), revised by Nicholas Barker, offers a bit more than three pages devoted to the entry titled “Condition.” I quote, “After the importance or interest or beauty of the book, which will always be paramount, the two most

urgent considerations in the mind of the book-collector are probably (a) the rarity of the edition, (b) the condition of the copy. And by condition he means a good deal more than the volume’s superficial, physical appearance, for the term covers ...” And the *ABC* goes on to discuss for several paragraphs what is meant by that last fraction of a sentence.

Subsections under “Condition” are titled “Adjectives of description” with subheadings “General,” “Of exterior,” “Of interior” and “Adjectives of Enthusiasm.” Each subsection offers several adjectives, often with a pithy comment added by the editor. For example, under “General” you will see “As new, fine, good, fair, satisfactory (a trifle condescending, this)” ... “working copy (may even need sticking together).”

Under the last subheading, “Adjectives of Enthusiasm,” you will find a quote pertaining to a modern, first edition: “...shaken, shabby, loose in binding, back-strip broken; foxed and goosed.”

Enthusiasm?

What about our NBS dealer members? I looked at a few rep-

representative catalogs and picked an example from George Kolbe. Other numismatic booksellers include similar definitions, though perhaps not quite so complete. All use many of the same terms in their catalog descriptions, even though they may not offer definitions. Best advice—know your dealer and make your own estimates of his meanings. Experience *is* a good teacher. Kolbe's definitions: As

new/mint—no signs of wear or defects; Very fine—near new, minimal signs of use; Fine—nice clean copy, slight signs of use; Good—average used and worn book, complete; Reading copy—poor but readable.

For me, as the title of this column suggests, it's what's between the covers that counts. If you're truly a book collector, you will, of course, want really nice books. *

Letters to the Editor

I would like to comment on two of the articles in the most recent issue of *The Asylum*. My copy of the Roper Auction Sale has the imprint mentioned in the article (M. Thomas & Sons, Philada., February, 1851. Auctioneers, 93 Walnut St.) I purchased my copy in 1977 at Katen Sale 45, The Wylie Hoard, at which I was in attendance.

Concerning the article on Charles C. Rood, I looked through my copies of *The Numismatist* of 1930 and 1931 to see if Rood had done any advertising. I found only one ad, in the July 1930 issue. Here Rood offered to trade 5 complete vols., plus extras of Mehl's *Numismatic Monthly*, for 1927-28-29 vols.

of *The Numismatist* "to complete my set." It seems if he needed the previous years' volume, his interest in numismatics may have been new in 1930. Rood also wanted any or all numbers of *The Numismatist* from 1888 to 1893.

In the November 1931 issue of *The Numismatist* there appeared a half-page notice titled "Warning." This cautioned ANA members of a fraud being practiced in purchasing back issues of *The Numismatist*. ANA members had sold back issues and had failed to receive payment. While no names were mentioned, one has to wonder if it might have been Rood.

—Dave Hirt

The Printer's Devil

—by Joel J. Orosz

A GLIMPSE INTO THE LOST WORLD OF ANTEBELLUM COIN DEALERS

Archaeologists can reconstruct intricate details of lost civilizations by studying a few humble shards of surviving evidence. One such modest artifact from the lost world of antebellum American numismatics has recently come to your columnist's attention, and its silent testimony reveals a surprising amount about the business practices of pioneering American coin dealers.

The nation's first numismatic merchants hung out their shingles during the administration of a president derided in his time as "old dough-face," James Buchanan. John K. Curtis and Augustus B. Sage were in business in New York City by 1857; Edward Cogan and (briefly) Dr. Montoville Wilson Dickeson opened their Philadelphia shops before the end of 1858. By 1860 Ebenezer Locke Mason also offered his wares in the Quaker City; and during that last full pre-war year, Alfred E. Robinson in Hartford and Henry Cook of Boston joined the fra-

ternity. These early merchants had storefronts, but, Cogan excepted, all turned to established auction houses, like Moses Thomas & Sons in Philadelphia or New York's Bangs, Merwin & Co., as venues for vendues.

The commercial world inhabited by this small brotherhood has vanished almost without a trace. No illustrations of their shops—exterior or interior—exist. True, there are rare engravings of the façades occupied by Thomas & Sons and Bangs, Merwin, but no record remains of the details from their day-to-day businesses. Not a single archive has survived; ironically, we know far more about how Pompeiian wine merchants plied their trade than about how John K. Curtis, for example, conducted his.

It may be instructive to choose Curtis as representative of the coin dealers during the Buchanan Administration. Emmanuel Joseph Attinelli, in his *Numisgraphics*, tells us that Curtis was born in England in

1828 and emigrated to New York with his parents, in 1841. He became a watchmaker and during 1843 commenced collecting coins. In 1857 he opened his own watchmaking and jewelry shop, on Bleecker Street in New York City, and in 1858 he wowed the American numismatic world by paying the large sum of \$700 for the Siegfried collection from Easton, Pennsylvania. As a New Yorker, did Curtis offer his coins exclusively to fellow gothamites, or did he have a broader clientele? Another way of asking that question is, "When did a national market in collectable coins develop?"

Little direct evidence bearing on this question seems to have survived. If Curtis or his compatriots had developed significant mailing lists, they have long since been lost. Some tantalizing clues, however, survive from priced and named auction catalogs. These artifacts tell us that certain eminent collectors attended (or were at least represented) sales away from their home towns (hardly surprising in light of the fact that by the 1850s major American cities were well connected by railroads).

New Yorker Charles Ira Bushnell purchased coins at the 1855 sale of the A.C. Kline collection (the "nom de numismatic" of John W. Kline) in Philadelphia. Similarly, Quaker City resident Joseph J. Mickley was

a purchaser at the Augustus B. Sage sale of the Henry Bogert collection in 1859.

Whether those eminent collectors attended personally or through agents, however, it seems likely that they were at least sent copies of the catalogs beforehand. Was it only the aristocracy of the coin hobby who received such mailings, or did they also go to the plebs?

Your columnist has now had the opportunity to study an ephemeral survivor of this era, one that suggests pre-Civil War dealers maintained mailing lists that included less-exalted collectors as well. Lot 101 of Remy Bourne's Public Auction 6 offered a copy of the Bangs, Merwin & Co. auction of November 23, 1860, "Catalog of a Private Collection of American Coins, Medals, and Fine Cents." Attinelli tells us that John K. Curtis owned this 289-lot collection, which brought \$102.47, a rather modest auction realization, even by 1860 standards. What makes this particular copy significant, however, is the fact that it was literally signed, sealed and delivered to its recipient. An examination of this unusual survivor provides us with an opportunity to reconstruct some small part of the lost world of antebellum American numismatic merchants.

The copy of the catalog in question is in its original paper

wrappers, octavo in size, its ten pages bound by a simple sewing. On the cover, we find the following statement: "Orders from purchasers, not able to attend, will be executed by the auctioneers." Perhaps one such purchaser was the addressee of the catalog, Mr. Walter Hosmer, Esq., of Hartford, Connecticut.

The catalog reached Mr. Hosmer, not after having been enclosed in a mailing envelope, but rather by being converted into a self-mailer. First, the person preparing the catalog for mailing opened the front cover then rotated it 90 degrees so the blank inside cover was closest to him. The person doing this work probably was John K. Curtis himself, for Bangs merely provided a venue for the auction sale. In any case, Curtis then folded the rest of the catalog toward him twice, so that one third of its former width was still showing above the inside cover. The next step was to fold the inside cover under the catalog, so as to cover its back, then over it, to cover its top. Now the catalog was completely wrapped in its own front cover, with the blank inside of the cover showing. Curtis (or his helper) finally wrote the address in brown ink on the exposed inside cover, and affixed a 1-cent stamp (interestingly, in the top left corner, where we place the return address). Finally, the operation

was completed by folding a half-inch flap of the cover under (so the left edge of the inside cover came into contact with the gutter margin of the inside cover), and closing it with two dabs of red sealing wax, slightly more than 2 inches apart.

The result is a makeshift envelope, just under 3 inches high by $8\frac{5}{8}$ inches wide, reading: "Walter Hosmer, Esq. / c/o Robbins & Winship / Hartford Conn" No return address is given, and the circular cancellation over the stamp is only partial, about half being off of the paper. It is also mainly illegible, although "Nov" and "17" can be discerned. The stamp itself is of interest as an example of the first to be sold by the Post Office in perforated sheets. According to the United States Post Office's publication *Postage Stamps of the United States*, it is a 1-cent stamp first issued July 1, 1851, depicting Benjamin Franklin, bust right, with an indigo blue background. These stamps were not issued in sheets, by the way, until February 24, 1857. This one came from a sheet, however, for its perforations are clearly visible. All four places on the inside cover where the sealing wax originally resided still show traces of its presence.

Just who might Mr. Hosmer have been? A James Hosmer of Hartford was a prominent mer-

chant and trustee of the Wadsworth Atheneum during this time period. Given his interest in collecting art, he may well also have been a coin hound. Might Walter have been James' brother? Neither Hosmer, however, became a major force on the coin scene, and today their name is utterly obscure in numismatics except for Walter's cameo appearance here.

The address on the letter offers a hint of another possible numismatic connection for Walter Hosmer. The catalog was sent to him care of Robbins & Winship of Hartford. "Robbins" is another forgotten name of the dawn of American numismatics, but it is connected to one of the most illustrious of these early personalities, Matthew A. Stickney of Salem, Massachusetts. Stickney, whose memorable collection was sold by Henry Chapman in 1907, was one of the "big three" American numismatists before the Civil War (the other two being Joseph J. Mickley and Robert Gilmer Jr.). What is little remembered today, however, is that another member of the Stickney family was also a prominent early member of the coin collecting fraternity.

In a letter to Edward Cogan dated July 2, 1867, Stickney quotes from an 1843 communication penned by William E. Du Bois of the United States Mint

on the subject of "amateurs of coins." Among the ten listed was a Reverend Doctor Robbins, whom Stickney identified as "my uncle" (for the most accurate transcription of this letter, see Appendix II of Q. David Bowers' *Louis Eliasberg: King of Coins*). According to *Dictionary of American Biography*, the Reverend Thomas Robbins (1777-1856) was a noted book collector and antiquarian; he is probably the one to whom Du Bois and Stickney refer. Whether Reverend Robbins was connected to Robbins & Winship, we do not know, but the *Dictionary of American Biography* tells us that the good Reverend lived his final years in Hartford and was buried there but four years before the Curtis catalog was published. While there is no "smoking gun," there may well have been some connection between Walter Hosmer and the Matthew Stickney family.

What then can be learned from this catalog about the lost world of 1850s coin dealers? First, it demonstrates that coin auctions were more than merely local affairs. Curtis, a New Yorker, sent the catalog to Hosmer, a resident of Hartford. Second, it proves that it was not only the Mickleys and the Bushnells who received out-of-town catalogs; even a second-tier figure like Hosmer was sent one. By 1860, therefore, the national

numismatic marketplace was clearly in development. Third, it tells us that Mr. Curtis was not a big believer in lead time; the catalog was postmarked in New York on November 17, and the sale was held on the evening of November 23. Granted, trains made next-day mail delivery in 1861 a possibility between New York and Hartford, but even so, five days' warning provided precious little time to act. Fourth, we learn why there is a decided absence of original mailing envelopes from the antebellum era residing in numismatic literature collections today—there were, in fact, probably no mailing envelopes used to send catalogs to distant customers. Fifth, it provides at least a hypothesis as to why so many early catalogs seem to come with deteriorated covers or none at all. Not only did the covers

tend to separate from the catalog, but they may have been discarded for being, in essence, a postmarked envelope.

The lost world of pioneering coin dealers remains mostly obscure, but thanks to this catalog, we now understand it a little better. It was at once more complex in its geography and more rudimentary in its office practices than we suspected. After all, John K. Curtis had a national mailing list and no envelope in which to send things. They employed materials still used today (such as stamps) and things seen today only in museums (like sealing wax). Nonetheless, these trailblazers led the way to the international hobby we enjoy today. Their lost world is, metaphorically at least, a story of "sealing wax and kings." *

**NUMISMATIC BIBLIOMANIA SOCIETY
NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

Friday, August 13, 1999, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

**American Numismatic Association
108th Anniversary Convention
Chicago, IL**

News from the Net

—by Pete Smith

The Numismatic Bibliomania Society e-mail newsletter has been named "The E-sylum." With 138 subscribers as of March 1, 1999, membership is open to anyone interested in numismatic literature. To get on the list, send your name and e-mail address to Wayne Homren at whomren@coinlibrary.com.

The NBS web site originally was provided by the American Numismatic Association. The NBS board decided to lease an independent site for easier updates and the opportunity to provide links to other commercial sites. The new address is <http://www.coinbooks.org>.

The following items have been reported and discussed in "The E-sylum" since the first of the year.

Adams Update

George Kolbe announced that he is working on an inexpensive revised edition of John W. Adams' *American Numismatic Literature-Volume I: Nineteenth Century Auction Catalogs*.

Ray Ellenbogen's death reported

Raphael "Ray" Ellenbogen died February 17, 1999, at his home

in Columbus, Ohio. He was 74 years old. Ellenbogen was a board member of the Society of Paper Money Collectors. He was an NBS member and contributor to *The Asylum*.

Woodward Web Site

A descendent of W. Elliot Woodward discovered the NBS web site. He has an extensive biography on Woodward and the family on his own web site. Check it out at <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Ithaca/2594/woodward/wewoodwardbiography.html>.

Sklovs Have Moved

David and Sherry Sklow have moved to the Cleveland area. Sklow has joined the staff of The Money Tree as cataloger.

Early Sale Report

Wayne Homren reported on an unnamed and undated newspaper clipping he found in an old book. It is the report of an early coin sale:

"A sale somewhat curious and interesting took place, a few evenings ago, in Tenth street, consisting of nine hundred and eighty lots of rare

American coins and medals. Mr. William C. Cook acted as auctioneer. The bidding was very spirited, especially for the finer pieces. Among the numismatologists present we noticed Messrs. Strawbridge, and McCoy, of New York, Mr. Cohen, of Baltimore, Leavitt, of Cincinnati, Chambers, of Providence, Bertah, of Mauch Chunk; and of Philadelphia, Messrs. Coffin, Zehnder, Jenks, Mickle, Cauffman, Emien, Moneita, Potts, Humphries, Jones, Nipper, Clarke, Cline, and others. Below we give prices of some of the finer pieces, which no doubt will prove interesting to many of our readers."

A 1796 half dollar realized \$28, an 1854 proof set realized \$21, a 1799 cent brought \$14 and a 1794 proof half dime brought \$8.13.

Enameled Coins

Michael Rae is interested in information on enameled coins. "I am thinking about writing a reference on such. It seems a great many were made during the Victorian era in Great Britain and France. These were done with quality workmanship."

Hoards

Dr. Phil Mossman asked, "Does anyone have any personal knowledge of any Wood's Hibernia, St. Patrick's, Voce Populi, or other Irish coppers

(prior to 1783) found in either hoards or recovered at archaeological sites in British North America? I'm making a census of all those reported (especially their location) to determine if a circulation pattern exists."

Query on Martin Gengerke

Scott Semans asked, "I'm trying to find out if a new edition of the work: *American Numismatic Auction Catalogs* by Martin Gengerke has ever been done, or if anyone has any edition of any work comprehensively listing auctions by US and/or foreign firms—to sell or lend."

Saul Teichman asked, "Is there any thought to the NBS taking over or producing its own version of Martin Gengerke's *Numismatic Auction book*? It is the kind of project all members should consider contributing to. It might be a good idea to have this book (which most of us use as a checklist) available and updateable on the Internet to keep it current."

Fred Lake responded, "As far as I know Martin Gengerke is still planning to produce a volume 9 of his 'Numismatic Auction Catalogs' listings."

Denis Loring replied, "Great idea, if and only if someone is willing to take ownership of the project and commit to seeing it through to completion (and, of course, if Martin agrees)."

Michael Berkman remarked

"I have already compiled a list of 20th Century action sales for my own use and I would not mind expanding it as a replacement to Gengerke. I would welcome any participation from others who would like to add to it, as it primarily covers the more recent auctionhouses (e.g. Bowers, Kagin's, Paramount, Stack's, Superior, etc.) Unlike Gengerke, it gives occasional notes as to the content of sale and, when applicable, the different bindings and special editions."

Report on eBay

Larry Mitchell commented on an on-line auction. "eBay acts as a venue only for all types of auctions. ... and it has two categories for numismatic books (U.S. and non-U.S.)"

Pete Smith added, "eBay 'Books' category has only six subdivisions: General, Rare, Fiction, Non-Fiction, Children and Textbooks. There are thousands of offerings in each category.

"The Coins and Stamps category has many subdivisions including one for 'Publications.' This includes old Red Books, Bowers' catalogs, and the kinds of things of greatest interest to collectors of numismatic literature."

Query on Treasurers

Tom O'Mara wrote, "I am doing some research on U.S. Treasurers ... and am having no luck finding much information. I am

specifically looking for biographies on most of the Treasurers from the late 1800's through the early 1900's. I can't believe how little available info there is ...there is a fair amount on Secretaries of the Treasury, but none on Treasurers. The Treasury Historical Society claims they have nothing."

Query on Ohio Counterfeit Notes

Wendell Wolka asked if anyone could provide photocopies of the Ohio pages from a certain Counterfeit detector. He could not name the detector but described the methodology:

"Composite woodcut drawings of specific notes are shown with key features of both genuine and counterfeit notes detailed and numbered on the image. These features are then numbered and described in a brief summary for each note."

Michael Sullivan responded, "I studied the photocopy you sent in October regarding the State Bank of Ohio \$5 and the Ohio State Stock Bank \$5 counterfeit notes along with the descriptive text provided. As you know most counterfeit detectors do not include any illustrations of actual notes from circulation. Rather, they typically provide engravings from design elements or entire notes for the express purpose of education.

"The \$5 State Bank of Ohio

note matches the descriptive text found in Hodge's 1857 edition. Other bank note lists from the era also match the \$5 State Bank of Ohio note. There are three publications subtitled 'Bank Note Mirror' which contained actual woodcut illustrations of counterfeit notes found in circulation:

"Dye's Book of Bank Note Plates, an Accompaniment to his Illustrated Bank Note Mirror for 1853. See Champa lot 211 which reads 'An album of reproductions of counterfeit notes, both entire bills and selected vignettes.'

"Dye's Bank Mirror, 1853 and 1855.

"Kennedy's fac Simile Counterfeit Bank Note Detector. Pittsburgh, 1856. See Kolbe-Adams lot 496 which reads 'Lithographic facsimiles of 8 counterfeit bank notes with descriptive text.'

"Unfortunately, I've seen but don't own these items. I suggest two ideas: 1) an OCLC search; and 2) Contacting Frank Campbell at the ANS to locate the items for your research."

Query on John Leonard Riddell

Brad Karoleff asked, "Does anyone know if the J.L. Riddell who wrote the 'Monograph of the Silver Dollar Good and Bad' is the same J.L. Riddell that was the postmaster of the Confederacy?"

Pete Smith responded,

"John Leonard Riddell was born in Leyton, Massachusetts, on February 20, 1807. He was an 1829 graduate of the Rensselaer School in Troy, New York. Trained as a botanist, he was a professor at Cincinnati Medical College and received his M.D. there in 1851. Later he taught at the Medical College of Louisiana which became Tulane University.

"In 1838 he was appointed melter and refiner for the New Orleans Mint, and he continued in that position until 1849. He wrote *A Monograph of the Silver Dollar Good and Bad* in 1845. He is noted for developing an early version of a binocular microscope in 1851. He spent the Civil War years in New Orleans and died there October 7, 1865.

"John Henninger Reagan was born in Sevier County, Tennessee, on October 8, 1818. He was elected to the Texas State Legislature in 1847. He was educated as a lawyer and was admitted to the bar in 1848. After serving as a district court judge, he was elected to the U.S. Congress and served March 4, 1857, to March 3, 1861. After outbreak of the Civil War, he was elected to the Congress of the Confederacy. In March of 1861, he was appointed by Jefferson Davis as Postmaster General of the Confederacy."

John Tidwell added, "The final piece of information that I

can add to Pete's answer is that Riddell served as the postmaster of the city of New Orleans from 1860-1863. Prior to that he had also served the city as a member of its Sanitary Commission during the study of the causes of Yellow Fever."

William T. Gibbs reported, "I hope to write an article about him in an upcoming issue of *Coin World*."

Wayne Homren had the last word, "The single best source of information I've ever found on Riddell is a monograph by Karlem Riess of Tulane University, first published in the *Tulane Studies in Geology and Paleontology* (Vol. 13, Nos 1-2, September 1, 1977) The 110-page study was also produced as an offprint by the Louisiana Heritage Press. The study reveals Riddell as a very colorful char-

acter, with achievements in the fields of medicine, botany, chemistry, geology and physics. While Director of the New Orleans Mint, charges were brought against him by a former mint workman, and Riddell was convicted of assault and battery.

As an avid reader of footnotes, I discovered two tantalizing gems for bibliophiles: one is a reference to a treatise that may never have been published, 'Short Historical Account of the United States Mint in New Orleans, Louisiana, and its Operations, Together with the Coining Process.'

"The other item is a note the Riddell's diaries were used in researching the study, and that they are on deposit at the Howard-Tilton Memorial Library at Tulane University in New Orleans." *

The World Turned Upside Down

by Joel J. Orosz, NLG

The world turned—or rather, began to turn—upside down on October, 19, 1781: the day Lord Cornwallis' British Regulars surrendered to George Washington's American Army. At least that was the name of the tune the British bands played as the Redcoats laid down their arms. For numismatists, the day their world turned—or at least, began to turn—upside down was March 20, 1957. For on that day, page 502 of Volume 23, No. 3 of *The Numismatic Scrapbook Magazine* consisted of an advertisement that began:

Now at the printers—a limited number of copies of one of the most extraordinary studies every completed on present-day numismatics. A GUIDE TO COIN INVESTMENT.

This humble, card-covered book was destined to play a major part in a movement that would knock a century's worth of American numismatic tradition into a cocked hat. No one was a more influential leader in the early part of this movement than Dr. Robert Bilinski, the "coordinating author" of *A Guide to Coin Investment*. Paradoxically, however, he is virtually forgotten today. Dr. Bilinski—in his books—played a large role in changing the course of American numismatic history. His contributions deserve to be remembered by the current generation, both collectors and investors.

It would not be unusual to see an advertisement such as the one quoted above in a numismatic journal today. Books touting the investment virtues of coins pop up in the 1990s like mushrooms after a rain. But in 1957, it was quite another matter. Although plenty of collectors were becoming interested in the investment aspect of coins—and a growing number of outright speculators—very few dealers catered to their needs.

The March 20, 1957, issue of *The Numismatic Scrapbook Magazine* carried advertisements for more than 350 coin dealers, but only one—Arnold Rosing—specifically mentioned investors or investing. The overwhelming majority of the advertisements were

THE WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN (CONTINUED)

in the spirit of the "let your collection grow" headline on Whitman Publishing Company's full-pager.

Truly, the collector was king, whether in the ads of Stack's from New York City or M. Jo Lipford of Shouns, Tennessee. Ms. Lipford, a very attractive woman, ran an eighth-page picture of herself to accompany her ad. (Thankfully, most of her considerably less fetching male colleagues did not use this device.) Several dealers did, however, offer bulk rolls of coins and other delectables favored by investors. The market was there, but the speculators of whom it consisted did not yet have a strong sense of self-identity.

American coin collectors, on the other hand, certainly did. By 1957 full-time dealers had been catering to their needs for exactly a century (by 1857 John K. Curtis in New York City and John W. Kline in Philadelphia were full-time coin dealers). Coin collectors of the Eisenhower era could shop among literally hundreds of national and countless more local dealers. Collectors also were supported by more than a century's accumulation of reference works about United States coinage, including price lists, auction catalogs, monographs and journals. Aaron Feldman, a dealer who ran an ad in that fateful March 20, 1957, issue of the *Scrapbook*, had long advised his clients to "buy the book before the coin." It was good advice, and those who took it never regretted it.

Feldman's dictum, however, rang hollow for the coin investors of 1957. Put simply, there wasn't much for them to "buy before the coin." To be precise, exactly one book had been written on the subject of investing in U.S. coinage: *United States Coins with A Good Numismatic Future*, authored in 1921 by Theodore J. Venn of Chicago. Mr. Venn's pioneering effort was met with resounding indifference, and by 1957 the book had long since been out of print and utterly forgotten.

Two brief, but intriguing articles written the year before by Dr. Bilinski had appeared in *The Numismatist*: "Investing—In Coins?" in May, and "Hobby or Speculation?" in October. There were a few tentative efforts by others, including "Are Coins Good Investments?" by A.M. Kagin in the February 1954 issue of *The Numismatist*; "Coin Prices Vs. Mintage" by S.F. Laughlin in April 1954 ; and "Collectors Vs. Investors?" by S.W. Freeman in the

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November 1955 issue.

But there was nothing very substantial, much less definitive, for the investor. In truth, the fact that both of Dr. Bilinski's articles, and two of the three others cited, had titles concluding with question marks demonstrates just how uncertain was the status of coin investment in 1957.

It was Dr. Robert Bilinski's destiny to play a large part in changing all this. A research psychologist employed by the United States Navy; he worked at the San Diego Naval Base and made his home in that city. A member of the American Numismatic Association (ANA) since March 1953 (#20631), Dr. Bilinski was becoming well known among the coin collecting fraternity. He delivered a paper at the 1955 ANA Convention in Omaha and published three articles in *The Numismatist* in 1956. He also authored a brief piece in the December 20, 1956, issue of *The Numismatic Scrapbook Magazine*, entitled "Psychological Aspects in Coin Collecting."

Now, as he surveyed the field, he was no doubt troubled by the nearly complete dearth of literature on numismatic investment. Coin collectors in Europe had books at least since the publication of Guillaume Bude's *De Asse et Partibus Eius* in Paris in 1514. American collectors had a literature since William E. Du Bois and Jacob R. Eckfeldt published *A Manual of Gold and Silver Coins of All Nations* in 1842. American numismatists, in particular, were richly endowed with general references, such as R.S. Yeoman's *Guidebook of United States Coins*. There also were excellent volumes on specific series of coins, such as Dr. William Sheldon's *Early American Cents* (which in 1957 was being revised for publication a year later as *Penny Whimsy*). All these books made coin collecting a more practical and richer experience. Dr. Bilinski was convinced that coin investors needed—and deserved—the same advantages. He decided to write one. To his credit, he compiled a monograph that could stand beside the works of scholarship mentioned above: not a puff piece, but an objective study.

To do this, in the best naval tradition, he called upon the fleet. The title page of *A Guide to Coin Investment* notes that it is "a numismatic research study, prepared, designed, and conducted by a group of government research scientists interested in

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coin collecting." As a naval employee, Dr. Bilinski had easy access to other numismatists, both in Navy blue and in mufti, across the world. He had mobilized this network for a three-month study of the prices of selected rolls of coins for his "Hobby or Speculation?" article in the October 1956 issue of *The Numismatist*. Now he called upon his collaborators to produce the first comprehensive national study of coin investment.

The result was an $8\frac{1}{2} \times 10\frac{3}{4}$ -inch, soft-covered book. Its red card covers wrapped around only 97 pages of text. But these few pages began to turn the numismatic world upside down. Dr. Bilinski and his associates, according to the acknowledgments, interviewed "over 5,000 coin collectors, investors, and dealers located in various parts of California, Chicago, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, Washington DC, Virginia, and Massachusetts." All of these locations, of course, housed naval bases or administrative installations. The subjects did not realize they would be interviewed to provide data for a book, therefore presumably gave unguarded and honest answers. The purpose, again quoting from the title page, was "to provide an almanac of coin collecting and investing information."

This raises an interesting point. In 1997, it is all but impossible to be a coin collector and investor. These two camps have different philosophies, needs, methods and goals. But in 1957, it didn't seem that way. To Dr. Bilinski and his friends, investors were part of the bigger world of coin collecting. With grading services "slabs" and "precision grading" still in the undreamed of future, they saw no reason why investors couldn't collect and collectors couldn't invest. So throughout the book, Bilinski used the terms "collector," "investor" and "numismatists" more or less interchangeably.

Dr. Bilinski divided the book into seven parts: I. the ever-popular starting point for authors, the "Introduction;" II. the "General Survey," which attempted to sketch the broad outline of numismatics, 1957-style, in the United States; III. "The Participants in Coin Collecting," an attempt to estimate the number of American collectors and then identify them by basic types; IV. "Types of Coins Being Collected," in which Dr. Bilinski tried to identify what was hot and what was not, as well as how many people were collecting in each area; V. "Investing in Coins," a

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polyglot how-to ranging from "income tax as it applies to coins" to "the Proof coin as an investment"; VI. "Coin Prices for U.S. Coins in 1960," a sweeping series of predictions on trends for the early space age; and VII. the tried and true ending point for authors, "Summary and Conclusions."

Forty years later, when a numismatist leafs through *A Guide to Coin Investment*, he is struck by just how old it seems. It is important to remember that although coin collectors in 1957 were as close in actual years to 1917 as to 1997, the psychic distance is not at all equal. If a numismatist from 1917 were to read *A Guide to Coin Investment*, some of it would be new, but most of it would make sense. On the other hand, if a collector from 1957 tried to make sense of a typical investment book of today, he would quickly become bewildered by terms such as "slab," "market-maker," "PQ" and "downside risk," not to mention "blast white."

A Guide to Coin Investment is thus a fascinating relic from a far different time in numismatics. So take a trip, won't you, back to the time when the collector was king, when 375 greenbacks bought a gem 1895 Morgan dollar, and when there was one—count 'em, one—grade of uncirculated coins.

Even at a relatively short 97 pages, this volume presents far too much information to summarize in any practical manner. Therefore, let us concentrate upon the nuggets it contains—perceptive observations, path breaking investigations and of course predictions: both those that proved to be breathtakingly accurate and those that turned out to be miles off the mark.

Bilinski begins chapter one, the Introduction, with the following:

The years 1955, 1956, and 1957 were characterized by a number of changes in the field of coin collecting, particularly an unusually large trend toward coin investing. How long this trend will continue cannot be determined easily, since so many variables have contributed toward it.

Here, the good doctor specifically identifies when coin investing reached a "take-off point." After World War II, America rapidly returned to peace and prosperity. Demand for consumer goods and time for hobbies, both of which were preempted by 16 years of Depression and war, simply busted out all over. As new collec-

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tors with new dollars poured into the hobby, prices began a steady march upward. By 1955, as the doctor notes, this movement had gathered enough momentum to capture the attention of thousands of speculators. Investing in coins had come of age.

Not everyone, however, was cheering. As Bilinski noted in the next paragraph:

When hobbyists concentrate their attention on investment and speculation, then something within the hobby tends to die. The fascination of coin collecting and the aesthetic appreciation of coins somehow diminishes when the profit motive becomes the dominant one.

Detractors notwithstanding, Bilinski pushed ahead. "This report, therefore," he said, "is designed as an aid to those expecting to start, and those already engaged in, coin investing." He closed this introductory chapter by reminding his readers that his book was based on "interviewing, analysis of records, experimentation, and statistical analysis," so they could be assured his conclusions were backed by solid research.

This reassuring note leads the reader nicely into Chapter II, The General Survey. Dr. Bilinski opens this chapter with a fascinating anecdote:

One day in May 1955 rumors were current that the Philadelphia mint was preparing to release the 1955 P half-dollar to the public. A month earlier it was whispered that the 1955 P nickel was going to be a coin investors' bonanza. And, at the same time speculators were busy buying and selling the 1955 D quarter at about twice its face value.

These three coins sparked one of the most fantastic, speculative years in the history of numismatics. The year 1955 culminated in the entire 1955 Philadelphia mint production of half-dollars and nickels being purchased by speculators prior to circulation, probably for the first time in history.

The purchase of these coins by speculators impressed both collectors and non-collectors. Coin investing is nothing new, but the rapid growth in the number of investors during the past few years is new.

To show just how recent this explosive growth was, Dr. Bilinski estimated the number of investors in numismatics during

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the years 1945-57. The estimate began at 50,000 in 1945; plateaued at about 200,000 in 1949-50, and shot up to 450,000 by 1956. Bilinski then hazarded a guess that by the early 1960s, the number would rise to 750,000, at which level it would reach a state of equilibrium. As it turned out, this was a very conservative prediction, but in 1957, it must have seem daring, indeed.

The reader in the first year of Ike's second term could get much good sense out of Chapter II. For example, on pages 9 and 10, Bilinski presents a shrewd analysis of rarity, in which he predicts (quite accurately, as it turns out), that the "scarce" 1955 and 1956 issues will, in the long run, not achieve a high premium because they were hoarded in great numbers at the time of issue. He concludes this chapter with graphs of the mintage of all circulating coins from 1940-56, and accurately predicts, based on the this data, that the low-mintage coin is the thing of the past.

In Chapter III, "The Participants in Coin Collecting," Dr. Bilinski tries to determine the number of collectors in the United States. He asked twelve of the hobby leaders of the day to provide their best guesses; these range from a low of 75,000 (Paul Seitz), to a high of 5,000,000 (R.S. Yeoman). Ever-analytical, the good doctor then proceeds to divide collectors into five "type A" categories and two "type B" categories. The type A varieties are defined as:

1. Hard core: those who collect with all the energy they can muster.
2. Active: equally interested in coins as a hobby and as an investment.
3. Fringe: hobbyists who are still feeling their way along.
4. Passive: accumulators who do not systematically collect.
5. Temporary: impulsive or transient collectors.

Drawing on research by his associates, Bilinski estimated that there were, as of 1956, 48,000 hard core; 850,000 active; 160,000 fringe; 750,000 passive; and 140,000 temporary collectors, giving a total of 1,948,000 type A collectors.

The type B collectors were defined as:

1. Investor: those to whom coins are purely a speculative adventure.
2. Dormant: those who were once collectors but now have left the hobby.

Research by the Bilinski team suggests that there were about

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450,000 investors in 1956, and about 2,632,000 dormant collectors. Thus, adding the number of type A collectors and investors yields 2,398,000 actively involved in numismatics in 1957. Adding to this sum the number of dormant collectors yields a grand total of 5,030,000 people who had at least a passing interest in numismatics. These collectors, according to Bilinski's calculations, spent \$28,285,000.00 on coins in 1956. Bilinski and his collaborators could not, however, produce one other important statistic, namely the total number of dealers. Here they were simply defeated by the proliferation of part-time and mail-order coin merchants. The doctor then closed the chapter by discussing the psychological factors involved in coin collecting. On this subject, his professional training served him well, for he perceptively explained why collectors do what they do.

In Chapter IV, Bilinski goes beyond the title, "Type of Coins Being Collected," to take a look into his crystal ball for future trends. Some of these predictions were vindicated, such as the suggestion that commemoratives, then almost exclusively a collector's series, were "sleepers" with a fine investment future, and also the prediction that the number of Indian cent collectors would fall. On the other hand, the doctor and company were doubly wrong in saying that "The silver dollar will join ... the large cent in the slow withdrawal from present day collecting." This prognostication, spectacularly off on both counts, clearly falls into the same category as early predictions elsewhere that "automobiles are just a passing fad."

Bilinski closes Chapter IV by raising that hardy perennial question in American numismatics: grading. As a test, a panel of Bilinski's team bought a roll of uncirculated 1955 cents from the bank, and also assembled a roll of the same cents from pocket change, taking care to select what we today would call almost uncirculated coins. They showed pairs of coins randomly selected from each roll to 300 collectors and asked them to pick the uncirculated coin. Only 144 out of 300 could do so. It would be interesting, in this age of so-called "precision grading", to repeat this experiment to see if modern-day dealers could do better.

In Chapter V, "Investing in Coins," Dr. Bilinski committed what later investment writers would consider a mortal sin: he admitted that certain stocks—gasp!—had been better invest-

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ments than coins since 1940! It was true—Bilinski's studies had shown that comparable amounts invested in a typical coin "portfolio" and in Goodrich Tire stock of that period resulted in Goodrich winning by a better than 3-to-1 margin. Moreover, he demonstrated that much of the demand that had fueled the rise of coin prices had been stimulated by astute advertising, which meant that the market for particular coins often dried up when the dealers began pushing something else. The tricks of hype advertising that he listed still can be found in every coin publication today: "... jump on the band wagon—everyone else is buying ... better buy now, while the supply lasts ... prices are bound to go up ... a speculator's dream come true ..." Unfortunately, his warning to avoid the allure of slick ads has fallen upon mostly deaf ears in the investment fraternity.

Bilinski was a prophet without honor in another key area, as well. "Quite naturally," he states, "the time to buy is when the coin price is at its lowest level." Despite this sound advice, thousands of speculators continue to chase the "hot" items with the result that they buy high—and ultimately sell low. When was a coin at its lowest level? Bilinski had a firm answer, at least for readers in 1957: "For most coins, the lowest price level is right now. Coins are on a climbing ladder as far as price is concerned, with but few exceptions." Never were truer words spoken. Those who took the doctor's advice in 1957 made very satisfying profits, indeed. Those who were able to follow that advice with serious money are no doubt driving Alfa Romeos in Palm Springs today.

After an interesting discussion of coin investment techniques, Dr. Bilinski closes his Chapter V with a warning that is still hotly debated in numismatic circles: "The danger of constantly rising prices." "It sounds fantastic," he begins, "but on the basis of present price trends, the 1914-D Lincoln cent, in the year 2000, will cost in uncirculated condition \$709.50." It would have sounded even more fantastic to Bilinski in 1957 if a time traveler could have informed him that the 1914-D cent, in MS-65 condition, would exceed this amount in 1977, more than a generation ahead of his prediction! Collectors, of course, were delighted with the rapidly inflating value of their holdings, but Bilinski reminds them that there are long-term consequences of prices that rise

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without restraint: "Coin collectors are slowly being pushed out of the uncirculated coin series," with the possible result: "High coin prices could cause new coin collectors to turn to other hobbies." Many coin collectors are concerned today that new—especially young—hobbyists seem so rare in numismatics: exactly as the good doctor foresaw 40 years ago.

Chapter VI, the heart of the book, consists of 32 pages of predictions of the 1960 prices for every commemorative and regular-issue United States coin. The result was a series of predicted values that must have seemed sky-high to those who read *A Guide to Coin Investment* in 1957. After all, when you could buy an uncirculated 1795 small eagle half eagle for \$300, it was hard to believe that in a mere three years, the same coin would cost \$420, an increase of 40 percent, at least according to the good doctor.

The doubters of 1957 were correct to question the accuracy of Bilinski's predictions, but for entirely the wrong reason. He did miss the mark on most of his prognostications, for his "wildly optimistic" forecasts proved, for nearly every coin in every grade, too conservative. The very coin cited above, the 1795 small eagle half eagle, was not worth \$420 in 1960, as Bilinski had predicted. Instead, it was going for \$435. The reader can peruse entire columns in these 32 pages of price predictions, ticking off coins whose 1960 value is underestimated, sometimes by a few cents, other times by hundreds of dollars. Only a mere handful were overestimated. Such was the momentum of the market fed by new collectors and investors that not even Bilinski and his associates could gauge its full potential in 1957.

Despite his generally optimistic tone, Dr. Bilinski closed his book in Chapter VII on a surprisingly bearish note. He concluded that "certain scarce coins ... will continue to sharply rise in price and ... it would appear best to either make purchases of these coins immediately, or not at all." This, as it turned out, was extremely sound advice. But the good doctor's general prediction for the next three years was not so rosy:

The coin years 1957 through 1960 are not likely to be as buoyant as 1950 through 1956. Price rises may become harder to sustain in a number of the less popular varieties of coins. Competition between coin dealers will probably increase. The

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coin boom, in other words, is showing signs of cooling off, and stability should replace what many thought would be an endless rise in prices. Whereas the problem in 1955 and 1956 seemed to be one of regulating a boom that threatened to get out of hand, the problem in 1957 through 1960 may be one of maintaining prices at their relatively high levels. Coin prices may increase, if they do, the pace of the increase will be much slower than it has been. However, for most coins, there need be no fear of a sharp drop in prices.

This was, with the exception of Nikita Khrushchev's vision that communism would bury capitalism, the most spectacularly wrong prediction of the 1950s. The coin price boom rolled on, price records were smashed monthly, and today's outrageous markup rapidly became yesterday's dirt-cheap price. In 1957 the coin market was red hot on its way to becoming white hot. The only problem in this market was for coin dealers to find the coins to satisfy collector and investor demand. No "famous psychic" working for the *National Enquirer* could have missed the boat so completely as Dr. Bilinski and his collaborating able-bodied seamen on this prediction.

In Dr. Bilinski's defense, it must be said that no one could have foreseen in 1957 the many factors that led to the binge of growth that numismatics enjoyed in 1957-60, particularly the huge influx of new collectors and investors into the field. Indeed, had psychologist Bilinski predicted in 1957 the levels coins would actually reach by 1960, his professional colleagues may well have confined him for observation. Given the tendency of later writers who trod the trail that Bilinski blazed—George Haylings comes immediately to mind—to hype potentials to the point of wretched excess, Bilinski's scholarly, conservative approach seems a breath of fresh air. Haylings and scores of others would produce strings of exclamation marks connected by colorful adjectives, all based on little or no investigation whatever. By contrast, Bilinski's work was grounded in research, meticulous in its preparation, and written in a straightforward matter-of-fact style.

Although Dr. Bilinski was by trade a psychologist, he proved no slouch at marketing books. In George Frederick Kolbe's 49th sale, dated October 18, 1991, lot 1165 contained copies of the

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first two editions of *A Guide to Coin Investment*. Both were the first copies of their respective editions, and both were presented to Leonel C. Panosh, a fellow San Diegan, and at that time, president of the ANA. In a letter accompanying the first edition, dated March 14, 1957, Dr. Bilinski explained that "It is believed that the coin collecting hobby has been in dire need of study of this type", but also confessed "we have no idea how the coin collectors within the United States will react to such material." He summed up his purpose in a single sentence: "Essentially, it is an attempt to examine where the coin collector is and where he might be going." This last sentence was diplomatic. The book was aimed solely at the investment aspect of numismatics, but Bilinski was writing to the president of the largest coin hobbyist organization, and he wanted to soften the impact that such a focus might have: a reaction to the possible charges of greed and avarice. How better to forestall such an outcry than to secure a favorable review from the president of the ANA?

As is happened, *A Guide to Coin Investment* didn't need Panosh's blessing to be eagerly received. The first printing was quickly snapped up, as were second and third printings that came out later in 1957. A 158-page, second edition was published in 1958. This press run, too, was sold out, and a third and considerably enlarged edition (223 pages) appeared in 1962. The fourth, and largest (294 pages) edition, hit the bookstands in 1969. Thus, thousands of copies of *A Guide to Coin Investment* were in circulation among the first generation of speculators as they quietly but quickly set about transforming the hobby of numismatics (or large chunks of it, anyway) into the coin investment "industry." It gave them a rationale for investing in coins, a method to follow, and a slew of predictions that could help them decide which pieces to buy. Just as Mao Zedong's legions had their "little red book," so did the men buying and selling rolls and singles for profit's sake, but this little red book was by "chairman" Bilinski.

All of this is not to say that *A Guide to Coin Investment* single-handedly caused the investment revolution in numismatics. Hardly—that revolution had begun, as the doctor had noted, before his book was ever published, and it would have been completed even if his *Guide* had never seen the light of day. What

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Bilinski did with his book was to hurry history along—to make the revolution happen faster, and with more reliable information. To quote Reggie Jackson, Dr. Bilinski was “the straw that stirred the drink.” He rallied an inarticulate mass of speculators into a group with a shared identity and purpose. After *A Guide to Coin Investment* was published, these were men who knew what they were about, men who could truly turn the numismatic world upside down.

Revolutions, however, have a way of consuming their own leaders. It is one of the ironies of history that frequently those who are the first to batter down the barriers to change are later regarded by the next generation of leaders as hopelessly reactionary. This happened in the civil rights movement, where young radicals came to regard the pioneers as anachronisms. And it happened in the coin investment field, too. Dr. Bilinski was the unquestioned leader in this field in the late '50s and early '60s. But by the mid-'60s, the age of hype was dawning. The young men who began establishing investor-oriented coin dealerships in the mid-'60s believed that relentless promotion was the key to sustaining the speculative boom. Dr. Bilinski, with his stubborn insistence on such quaint ideas as objective research and hard facts, was at best a dinosaur, and at worst a nuisance, in the new scheme of things.

From 1957 to 1962, *A Guide to Coin Investment* went through five printings in three editions. As the speculative hoopla intensified, the market for serious books on investing disappeared in favor of effusions from hucksters like George Haylings. It took seven years for the fourth edition of *A Guide* to be published. Despite the fact that the title page of the fourth edition reads “It is intended to issue further editions in the future so as to provide the numismatist with a continuing up-to-date flow of information ...” Bilinski would not lower his standards, so the fourth was the final edition. He was never again a factor in coin investment, or in numismatics in general.

It is not known what became of Dr. Bilinski. We do know that he resigned his ANA membership in 1964, and published his last coin investment book in 1969 (this edition indicates he had moved to Del Mar, California). Despite that the good doctor seemingly has disappeared as completely as Jimmy Hoffa, his

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influence on numismatics has not, and perhaps never will. In 1957 investors were the merest blip on the radar screen of an innocuous hobby; only eight years later, they were being accused by government officials of having nearly halted the commerce the nation through their hoarding of new coinage issues. This astonishing turn of events is another story.

For now, it remains to explain why *A Guide to Coin Investment* proved so influential in the late 1950s. There is one obvious answer, and that is timing. Bilinski wrote his book at precisely the moment that hundreds of thousands of new collectors were driving up the prices of coins, and tens of thousands of the fraternity were prepared to exploit these appreciating prices for the sake of investment. But there is a more subtle reason. Bilinski's scholarly approach was tremendously important for the new calling of coin investment. Had he been a huckster, the whole notion of coin investment could have been dismissed, initially at least, as an orgy of greed.

Bilinski's carefully researched and accurately presented books, however, gave the infant investment field some credibility among serious numismatists. If the first writers in the field had been cut from the cloth of George Haylings, it is quite doubtful that there would have been, for example, an Empire Investors Report newsletter published as early as 1963. By paving the way for well-respected main line dealers like the Empire Coin Company and the Hollinbeck Coin Company to start catering to investors, he assured that speculation would become an enduring part of American numismatics.

It is not enough, however, to say of Dr. Robert Bilinski that he was merely in the right spot and the right time, or that he simply placed a mask over the bare face of profit-seeking. By writing *A Guide to Coin Investment*, he guaranteed that the idyllic hobby of coin collecting, which had until 1957 been to a large extent the preserve of gentlemen learned in the lore of numismatics, would be accessible to any kid with two quarters to buy a roll of "pennies" at the bank. This was the true significance of the coin investment revolution: the democratization of numismatics. This revolution, like all such upheavals, has had its moments of sublime glory and its moments of disgusting squalor. Inevitably,

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there has been much conflict between the collector and investor. Let us propose a truce, however, at least long enough to pay tribute to the man whose little books did so much to start these big arguments.

So here is to Dr. Robert Bilinski, collector, investor and—most importantly—the author who turned the numismatic world upside down. *

Acknowledgment

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The Development of the Coin Album Part Four

by David W. Lange

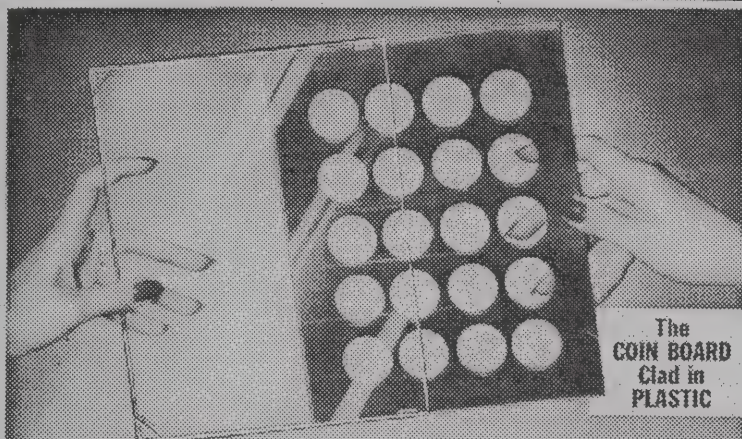
This installment continues the saga of Whitman coin folders with a look at some of the company's lesser-known products. In addition to the familiar blue folders still being produced today, Whitman introduced four other products to supplement this line. These met with varying degrees of success, and all are now obsolete and somewhat scarce as collectibles.

The first of these alternative items sought to meet the post-World War II challenge presented by plastic coin holders such as those still manufactured today by Capitol Plastics. To do this, Whitman actually reverted to the old format of one-piece boards that it had utilized so successfully from 1934 to 1942. This concept was updated by slipping the board between two, interlocking panels of rigid polystyrene. The result was a new line of coin boards called "PlastiClad."

Made of heavy cardstock, the boards were finished with gold lettering on paper of bright, leafy green, with brown-colored marbling and a grained texture. Each board measured 7 x 9 inches, its dimensions being increased only slightly by the slipcover plastic frame. To insert the coins, it was necessary to slide the board out from between the plastic panels. When the board with its coins was reinserted, the chemically inert polystyrene afforded a measure of protection to the coins, though their edges were still in contact with the cardstock.

Twelve titles were introduced in the summer of 1956, most of these being generic in nature, such as "U. S. MINT SETS" or "NICKELS" without dates. Only three of the boards were for a complete series by date and mint, that series being the Lincoln cent. An additional Lincoln cent board was added shortly thereafter to keep up with its ongoing mintage. By the beginning of 1957, two boards for the Jefferson nickel series had also been added. Complete series boards were ultimately produced for Buffalo nickels, Mercury dimes and Roosevelt dimes, bringing the

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COIN ALBUM (CONTINUED)



New!

WHITMAN PlastiClad Coin Displayers

★ View coins from both sides!

★ Protect coins from handling!

Now . . . your coins are "on display" with both sides showing! Whitman's PlastiClad Coin Displayers provide extra convenience, extra protection and extra satisfaction with "showcase" visibility. Board with securely held coins is fully enclosed by the crystal clear plastic sheath. Coins are readily accessible. Large 7 x 9 inches (larger by far than this magazine page). Your better coins are worth more today so it pays to buy this better protection for them.

\$1.00
EACH

At Your
Hobby Dealer

Get PlastiClad Displayers for all Standard U. S. Coin Sizes and Mint Sets

No. 9101 Lincoln Cents 1929-1934
No. 9102 Lincoln Cents 1935-1939
No. 9103 Lincoln Cents 1940-1953
No. 9104 Lincoln Cents Striking 1954
No. 9105 Jefferson Nickels 1938-1946
No. 9107 Jefferson Nickels Striking 1947
No. 9125 U. S. Mint Sets—prior to 1956 for
2 years—Printed Captions, no dates.

No. 9126 U. S. Mint Sets—For 1956-57-58
Denver and Philadelphia Mints.
No. 9127 U. S. Mint Sets—For 1 Mints, 2
years. No Captions.
No. 9150 Cents (No Printing)
No. 9151 Nickels (No Printing)
No. 9152 Dimes (No Printing)
No. 9153 Quarters (No Printing)
No. 9154 Halves (No Printing)

Whitman

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COIN ALBUM (CONTINUED)

final total to 19. Curiously, a 1960 advertisement in *The Numismatist* claimed that some 37 varieties were available, including a title for commemoratives. I don't believe these additional boards were actually produced. If they were offered, they're exceedingly rare today.

Priced at \$1 apiece, PlastiClad boards enjoyed moderate success through at least 1962, when the last advertisements appeared. Being neither fish nor fowl, however, their future was not bright, and I've seen none dated beyond 1961.

There were several problems with this product, both technical and aesthetic, that limited their desirability. Anyone who has built plastic model kits will know how brittle polystyrene is, and PlastiClad holders are usually found with their corners broken off. Another quality of transparent polystyrene is that it very easily scuffs, soon obscuring whatever is behind it. Only moderate handling was necessary to dull the plastic and make viewing of the coins a chore. Of all the collectable coin holders, the PlastiClad line are the hardest to find in pristine condition. In fact, they're hard to find in any condition, and I currently own only six of the advertised titles.

Perhaps in response to the disappointing reception afforded its PlastiClad holders, Whitman reworked the same boards into a new folder format beginning in 1958. Marketed as the "ALL-IN-ONE" folder, it offered the same green boards arranged in book form, the pages secured with matching, grayish-green backing papers. Heavy covers, slightly larger ($7\frac{1}{4} \times 9\frac{1}{4}$ inch) than the boards, reinforced the book concept. They were printed with gold lettering on front and the spine. The result was one of the most attractive and durable coin folders ever produced.

In addition to their fundamental appeal, the reason for the success of this folder is obvious from the perspective of sheer economy. As its name implies, the ALL-IN-ONE folder was large enough to house the entire Lincoln cent collection under one cover. Its cost was \$1.50 versus the \$4 required to hold a complete set in PlastiClad boards. In addition to the Lincoln cent folder, other titles offered from the outset were those for Jefferson nickels, Mercury-Roosevelt dimes and Year Sets. The line eventually grew to a total of 19 titles, though three of these were taken up by the Morgan dollar series, the only one that wouldn't fit

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COIN ALBUM (CONTINUED)

under a single cover. Since the ALL-IN-ONE line was intended for more advanced collectors, it included several obsolete series, such as Barber dimes, quarters and halves. Due to the great number of pages possible in its format, the entire run of Shield, Liberty Head and Buffalo nickels from 1866 to 1938 was collectable under a single cover, while the same was true for Mercury and Roosevelt dimes.

Like the blue Whitman folders, the ALL-IN-ONE line included a paper endflap featuring historical information about the particular coin series and a complete listing of dates and mintages on one side. On its other side was a listing of folders available in this format, as well as an advertisement for popular Whitman guidebooks. The ALL-IN-ONE titles also included a clever feature that didn't appear in other folders. Because their cardstock covers were so thick that a coin couldn't be pushed out of its hole from behind, as in conventional folders, the pages backed by the covers have finger notches projecting from each hole, enabling the coins to be lifted out from the front. Pages not backed by covers did not require notches in the holes. Another appealing feature, though not unique to this line, was the way in which the pages folded onto one another from left and right, allowing a greater number of pages than was possible in the conventional, right-to-left folding. When an ALL-IN-ONE folder is opened in its entirety, it presents quite an impressive display.

Another feature shared with other Whitman folders of the time is the distinctive sequence of holes within each album. Until about 1959, Whitman arranged the text for each date and Mint to read P-S-D, the order in which the Mint totals are given in the *Annual Report of the Director of the Mint*. After that date, the holes were resequenced to read P-D-S, and this practice remains current in all coin folders and albums. Curiously, I've not been able to find the same title having both sequences, but I believe that the first four titles produced, those for Lincolns, Jeffersons, Mercury-Roosevelt dimes and Year Sets, will ultimately be found in both sequences.

Based on the numbers which have survived, ALL-IN-ONE folders were evidently more successful than the PlastiClad boards. They were manufactured as late as 1965, after which time the production of all coin folders and albums was sharply curtailed as

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COIN ALBUM (CONTINUED)

a result of the declining hobby. Because of their fine construction, these folders (which look more like albums) are frequently found in collectable condition. I know of hoards of unsold remainders, and I even have in my collection an original, factory-wrapped bundle of one title.

After reaching its pinnacle of popularity in 1960-64, the hobby of collecting coins from circulation declined rapidly for reasons that are already well known. This affected the market for coin folders and albums, and only those manufacturers with the strongest market share were able to survive. This essentially limited the field to DANSCO and Whitman (by then a division of Western Publishing Company, Inc.). Whitman greatly curtailed its line of blue folders, while discontinuing all other lines save for its successful "Bookshelf" series of deluxe albums.

Once the hangover from those heady days of the early '60s began to wear off, Whitman attempted to introduce a new line of folders which permitted more realistic collecting goals. Titled the CURRENT ISSUES COIN COLLECTION, its new series of five folders created in 1972 included only those coins which could conceivably still be found in circulation. These included cents from 1959 to date, nickels, dimes and quarters starting in 1965 and halves beginning with 1964.

I have no information regarding these folders other than what can be obtained by examining the folders themselves. Whitman placed no ads for these products in numismatic publications, as they evidently were not aimed at persons already familiar with the hobby. I'm not certain what their list price may have been, though a figure at or near one dollar is likely. The construction of these folders is very spare, and the materials used are not equal in quality to those of Whitman's earlier products.

The CURRENT ISSUES COIN COLLECTION folders measure 7 x 9 inches and are made of tan cardstock that is grained and coated to create a leatherette appearance. From the two titles I own, it seems that each title's front cover is printed in a different color and includes multiple images of the coin type in the form of line drawings. Also found on the cover are Whitman's globe logo (adopted in the mid-1960s), the title of the folder, its catalog number and the legend CURRENT ISSUES COIN COLLECTION. This last feature was new to the Whitman roster of albums and folders,

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COIN ALBUM (CONTINUED)

as all previous editions had omitted any mention of the product name. Due to their extreme thinness (each folder includes just two pages), the spines are unlabeled.

Inside, these folders have brown printing on cream facing paper, and their backing paper is of grained ivory. The endflap includes on its inside a history of the coin series, while on its outside is found instructions on the collecting and preservation of coins.

While the offering of folders for current issues may have seemed a sound concept to the folks at Whitman, the simple fact of the matter was that no one cared about collecting the coins still circulating in 1972, a reality which has changed little in the quarter century since. This line of folders was apparently a dismal failure and the numbers printed small, as they are very scarce today. This series of folders and the one that followed it offer a wonderful collecting opportunity, as these items can be purchased for as little as 25 cents from coin dealers who would otherwise simply discard them. Should the hobby of collecting coin albums and folders ever become a mainstream activity, these pieces will emerge as some of the rarest collectibles.

Whitman's most recent attempt to create a compromise product between its inexpensive blue folders and its deluxe albums was launched in 1977. Called the DELUXE COIN COLLECTION, it was a clever and economical reworking of existing dies and stencils. For example, this line of five titles is identical in construction and materials to the ALL-IN-ONE series, while the cover of each album utilizes the same graphics found on its CURRENT ISSUES COIN COLLECTION counterpart! The only distinctions are found in coloration.

The DELUXE COIN COLLECTION folders feature covers that have the same grained cardstock used for the ALL-IN-ONE line but with dark brown paper in place of green. Each folder's spine includes a catalog number which is printed with the numbers stacked vertically to read top-to-bottom, while the older edition read left-to-right and was printed parallel to the spine. Inside, the DELUXE COIN COLLECTION folder is printed in brown ink on cream facing paper with tan backing paper. The paper endflap of each folder is an exact reprinting of that used for the CURRENT

continued in next issue

The Numismatic Bibliomania Society Membership Application

YES, I hereby apply for membership in the Numismatic Bibliomania Society. I understand that I will receive the Society's quarterly journal, *The Asylum*.

Name: _____

Street: _____

City : _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Other numismatic organizations I have been affiliated with: _____

My collecting interests are: _____

Membership dues are \$15.00 in North America, \$20.00 elsewhere. Members receive all copies of the current volume of *The Asylum*.

Return application with payment to:

NUMISMATIC BIBLIOMANIA SOCIETY

DAVID HIRT, SECRETARY

5911 QUINN ORCHARD ROAD

FREDERICK, MD 21701

I hereby make application for membership in the Numismatic Bibliomania Society, subject to the bylaws of the organization.

Signature of Applicant

Date

THE ASYLUM

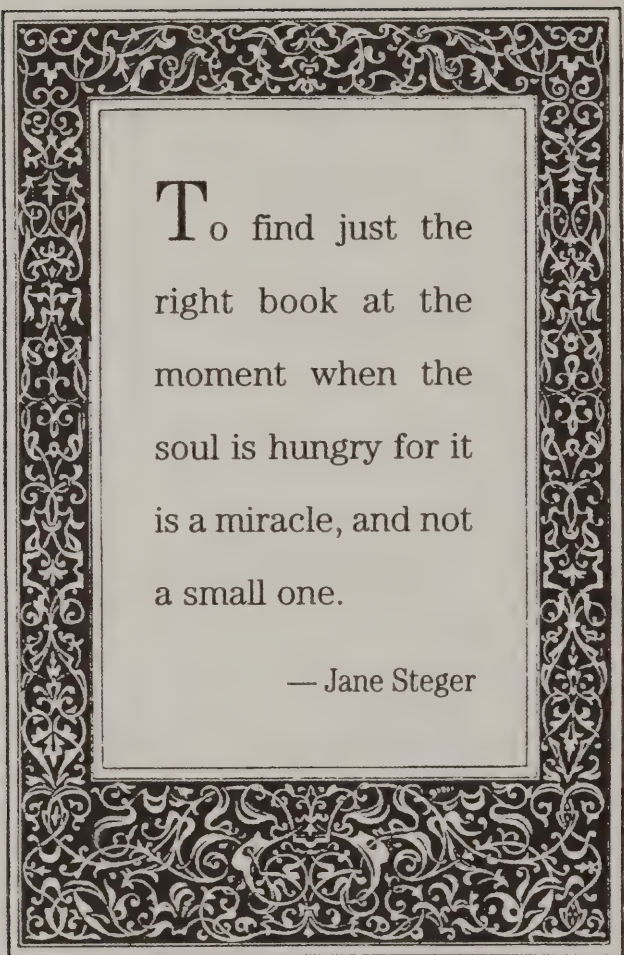
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Summer 1999

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To find just the
right book at the
moment when the
soul is hungry for it
is a miracle, and not
a small one.

— Jane Steger

NUMISMATIC BIBLIOMANIA SOCIETY OFFICERS

Vice President

Wayne Homren
1810 Antietam St.
Pittsburgh, PA 15206

President

Michael Sullivan
P.O. Box 32131
Cincinnati, OH 45232

Secretary-Treasurer

Dave Hirt
5911 Quinn Orchard Rd.
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Members of the Board

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Bill Murray, 7400 Crestway, Apt. 1423, San Antonio, TX 78239
Joel Orosz, 4300 Old Field Trail, Kalamazoo, MI 49008
Scott Rubin, P.O. Box 6885, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648
Pete Smith, 2424 4th St. NE, #12, Minneapolis, MN 55418
Frank Van Zandt, 6032 Van Zandt Rd., Livonia, NY 14487

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Publication Editor: Marilyn Reback

P.O. Box 1110
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Editor-in-Chief: Bob Metzger

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President's Message — by M.L. Sullivan

Every three months for the last few years, I've had the opportunity to prepare a "President's Message" summarizing the near-term successes of the organization and an outward look to the coming months. Being an election year for NBS, it is time for a change of leadership; this being my last "President's Message." Enclosed with this issue of *The Asylum*, you will find two ballots, **both due by July 27**, mailed to our Secretary-Treasurer (see directions on the ballots):

Officers and Trustees Election Ballot
Annual Asylum Writers' Award Ballot

Election of Officers and Trustees

Fifty percent of our existing officers and trustees are running for re-election. The new officers and directors will be installed effective with the August ANA Convention.

President Wayne Homren

Vice President David Sklow

Secretary-Treasurer . . David Hirt

Trustees (6 positions)

Bob Metzger Scott Rubin

Joel Orosz Larry Mitchell

Bill Murray Tom Sheehan

Annual Writers' Award

Please take the time to vote for the annual writers' award recipient. The award will be prepared and presented during the NBS Meeting at the ANA Convention. You may recall our recipient last year was Joel Orosz for his superb history of our organization.

I would like to thank the current officers (Wayne Homren and Dave Hirt) and trustees (George Kolbe, Bill Murray, Joel Orosz, Scott Rubin, Pete Smith and Frank van Zandt) for their solid support to improving NBS over the last few years. The organization was overhauled, bylaws updated to reflect the needs of the organization, the web site was developed, the "E-sylum" became a weekly staple for members and non-members alike, and our membership roles have increased with numerous new names to the hobby. I wish the new club leadership the greatest success. *

Letters to the Editor

Re: "United States Treasury Specimen Books" by Raphael Ellenbogen (*The Asylum*, vol. XVI, no. 1, Winter 1998, pp. 12-18)

While cataloging your article for our library here at the American Numismatic Society, I came across what I believe is an error: the Library of Congress does indeed have a United States Treasury specimen book, contrary to what they told Mr. Ellenbogen. I located the book by searching on the Library of Congress web site (<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/catalog/>) using the spine

titles as given by the author of your article. Here's a brief description of the specimen book as described by LC:

Portraits and vignettes/Presidents of the United States for the first 100 years of its existence

engraved by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, Treasury Department.

Washington: The Bureau, 1883.

[22] leaves of plates: all ill.; 20 cm.

—Tamara Lee Fultz

Assistant Librarian

American Numismatic Society

New Members

Darryl Atchison, Ireland

John T. Hummer, Round Lake, NY

Dr. Carlos Jara, Ft. Lauderdale, FL

Jonathan Kagan, Clinton Corners, NY

Gail Kraljevich, Colorado Springs, CO

Dan Rosenthal, Berkeley, CA

Steven Schor, Lighthouse Point, FL

John A. Schroeder, Racine, WI

Mark Tooth, Toronto, Canada

Stoffel Vogelaar, Ireland

—David Hirt, Secretary-Treasurer

News from the Net

— by Pete Smith

The following items appeared on "The E-sylum," the Numismatic Bibliomania Society Internet newsletter in March, April and May 1999. Those interested in receiving the mailings should send their E-mail address to Wayne Homren at whomren@coinlibrary.com.

Nominations Sought

NBS President Michael J. Sullivan announced that nominations were being accepted for officers and board members. The election will be completed by the ANA convention.

Archives

Joel Orosz, who serves as NBS historian, announced that he has organized the club archives and will provide historical information for the club on request.

Bibliography

Larry Mitchell is creating a bibliography of numismatic books. It appears on the NBS web site, <http://www.coinbooks.org>.

Publications Announced

Allan Davisson mentioned a new book by Paul and Bente Withers, *British Copper Tokens, 1811-*

1820. It is an update of an earlier reference by William John Davis.

George Fuld announced publication of the second edition of *Medallic Portraits of Washington*, published by Krause, and written by Fuld and Russ Rulau.

Bill Murray submitted his recommendation for Bill Fivaz' book *Helpful Hints for Enjoying Coin Collecting*.

Research Requests

David J. Davis asked for help tracing the pedigrees of five 1802 half dimes sold at auction in the past century. The data is intended for a new book by Russ Logan and John McCloskey. Ken Bressett, Wayne Homren and Joel Orosz provided buyers' names, sale prices and other helpful information.

Christian Dekesel, who compiled a bibliography of 16th-century numismatic publications, asks for information on holdings of 17th-century material.

Barry Tayman and George Fuld asked for information about Canadian blacksmith tokens for

a monograph they are writing.

Ben Keele is seeking information on the currency of Biafra.

Keele also is looking for information on the history of National Banks of Hastings, Nebraska.

W. David Perkins asked if anyone could identify J.O.K., listed as the buyer of an About Uncirculated 1799/8 B-1 silver dollar from Lester Merkin's sale of September 18, 1968.

Grover Criswell's Death Reported

Grover Criswell Jr., past ANA president, died April 8, 1999. Criswell was a dealer and authority on Confederate currency. He was founding editor of the *Bank Note Reporter* (1972) and a founding member of the Society of Paper Money Collectors.

Finds

Dave Hirt found a copy of E.J. Barra's 1863 *Something about Coins* at the Pennsylvania Association of Numismatists show. The rare pamphlet is mentioned in Attinelli.

Catalogs offered

John Adams offered several runs of catalogs for the costs of shipping. These included catalogs from ANA sales, Johnson & Jensen, Kagins, Kreisberg and Hans Schulman.

Katen Update

Remy Bourne reports that Frank Katen is "Doing just fine but slowing down with age." Ken Lowe, who died at age 52, said that Katen, now 96, "Will outlive us all."

Mehl Update

An article in the December 28, 1998, issue of the *Business Press* of Fort Worth mentioned the building that was home for the B. Max Mehl coin company. The building is being remodeled at an estimated cost of \$1.5 million. It is in the city's Fairmount Historical District and on the highly significant endangered list.

Sphinx Society

An article in *The Asylum* had Randolph Zander describing Ray Byrne as the founder of the Pittsburgh Sphinx club. The club remains active without officers, committees or business meetings.

A Curious Coin of 1652

This quote comes from the May 1865 issue of *The Historical Magazine*:

"Can any of the readers of *The Historical Magazine* throw any light upon the origin or history of the following curious coin, which was dug up in the town of Norton by Mr. Briggs a few years since. It bears upon the obverse the impression of two distinct punches — one giv-

ing the date 1652; the other the figures VIII, surmounted by a lion. Below the Roman numerals is the letter S between two dots.

"Upon the Reverse, there is an impress of the figure XII, underneath which is a shield between two dots. The planchet is the same size and bears a similar resemblance to the N.E. shilling, but is of copper.

"This coin has recently come into the possession and is now in the cabinet of Mr. George T. Paine of this city. The coin bears a decidedly New England appearance, and may have been struck as a trial or pattern piece to supply the want which was felt at that time for a copper currency.

"Can anyone suggest anything further in regard to this interesting coin?"

Ken Bressett came up with an answer 134 years after the question was posed. He remarked that the coin was a copper "8 maravedis" of Spain, found with countermarks and popularly known as the "tattooed coins" of Spain. They frequently are seen at less than \$5.

Another Tidbit

This quote comes from *The Historical Magazine* of November 1873:

The famous sayings of great men are, one by one, dropping from sight. The last to suffer is the "Millions for defense, but not one cent for tribute." Nearly 80 years ago, General Pinckney, then minister to France, was informed that the payment of a certain sum might settle the diplomatic dispute between the two countries; and history says that General Pinckney indignantly replied: "Millions for defense, but not a cent for tribute."

And now comes a respectable citizen of Charleston, S.C., and shows, by indisputable authority, that at a meeting of the Cossack-club, of which General Pinckney was a member, the latter was asked by another member whether he ever made such a remark, and replied: "No: my answer was not a flourish like that, but simply, 'Not a penny, not a penny.'" *

NUMISMATIC BIBLIOMANIA SOCIETY

NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Friday, August 13, 1999, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

American Numismatic Association 108th Anniversary Convention
Chicago (Rosemont), IL

The Printer's Devil

— by Joel J. Orosz

A.P. WYLIE, KEEPER OF THE FLAME

Historians are well aware of the dangers involved in claiming something or someone to be a "first." No sooner does one do it, than an earlier claimant comes to the surface. This has certainly been the case with numismatic literature dealers, for no sooner had some historian anointed Frank Katzen as the first of the breed to offer literature as the primary stock in trade than Katzen himself advanced W.C. Sanders of New Haven as a predecessor. Then NBS member Pete Smith, in his "Names in Numismatics" column in the December 1997 issue of *The Numismatist*, offered the current undisputed "first" numismatic literature dealer, Charles Rood of Detroit.

If we stretch the definition a bit, however, to include dealers whose primary focus was vending coins or currency but who placed a heavy emphasis on numismatic literature, then the field becomes far broader and extends farther back. The first blockbuster coin auction, the sale of the A.C. (John W.) Kline collection in 1855, contained 38

lots of books (see this space, Summer 1993), and he later amassed a hoard of old auction catalogs. Pioneering coin dealer Augustus B. Sage once conducted a numismatic book raffle (see this column, Winter 1992). W. Elliot Woodward saved and sold thousands of old auction catalogs (see "The Printer's Devil," Fall 1994), and Lyman Low was among the first to offer fixed price lists (starting in 1883) and even auctions (beginning in 1886) devoted exclusively to numismatic literature. Others could be cited as well, including the brothers Chapman, Ed. Frossard and William H. Strobbridge.

One of these 19th-century dealers presents us with a paradox, for he is at once the best and least remembered of the genre. His name is, at the same time, synonymous with 19th-century numismatic literature and all but forgotten as a dealer in such material. His name was Alexander Parker Wylie, of Illinois. According to Pete Smith's *American Numismatic Biographies*, Wylie was born the year

the Civil War began (1861) and lived nearly to the end of the Hoover Administration (1931). He became a collector at the tender age of 15 and a dealer about 9 years later.

We remember Wylie best, of course, as the owner of the "Wylie Hoard" of catalogs, a remarkable aggregation of nearly 5,000 pieces that eventually was dispersed to the numismatic literature fraternity in a series of six Frank Katen auctions from 1977 to 1979. Both Katen and John W. Adams, who also was involved in the hoard's coming to market, have ably told the story of the grouping that undoubtedly was begun by W. Elliot Woodward, in articles published in *The Asylum* (Winter 1989 and Winter 1993).

While most numismatic bibliophiles remember Wylie as a hoarder, few know he was also a currency and literature dealer. The reason for this obscurity is, ironically, that Wylie produced few catalogs himself. According to Martin Gengerke's *American Numismatic Auctions*, Wylie conducted no auction sales, and his coin collection was sold in four M.H. Bolender sales (numbers 100, 101, 103 and 112, from 1935 to 1937). Wylie's only known output consisted of fixed price lists, of which he apparently produced at least seven or eight.

Unfortunately, very few of

these lists seem to have survived. The only ones that have appeared in recent years, according to Charles Davis' *American Numismatic Auctions*, are "No. 7 Price List of Paper Money," and an "unnumbered Price List of Paper Money," neither dated, but from internal evidence, published around World War I. An examination of each sheds some light on this forgotten aspect of Wylie's career.

The "No. 7" Price List was produced in 1916 or later, as evidenced by Wylie's offering of a "priced coin auction cat. 1916" for 40 cents. The price list is a modest, single sheet measuring 6³/₄-inches high by 8¹/₂-inches wide, made into a trifold 6³/₄-inches high by 2⁷/₈-inches wide.

This list is mainly as billed—an offering of paper money, fractional currency, Confederate currency, encased postage stamps, Colonial and Continental currency, and broken bank bills. A box at the bottom, however, offers a special list of coins and Wylie's statement: "I carry a large line of American coins." The last 24 lots, under the heading "miscellaneous," offer a glimpse of the range of Wylie's extensive holdings of numismatic literature.

Thirteen of the 24 lots offer publications, including the previously mentioned priced catalog from 1916. Two entries

show that Wylie was energetically attempting to reduce the size of his hoard; one offers 100 "auction coin" catalogs before 1890, including priced catalogs, at \$2.50 postpaid, while the other offers 100 catalogs from 1859 to 1915, including priced versions, "listed at six dollars" for \$3 postpaid. Nor was this 3-cents-per-catalog deal the only bargain. One of the lots offered four bound volumes of *The Numismatist* for \$4, and another described a single volume, unbound, for 75 cents.

As the last two lots illustrate, Wylie's economy of description tended toward the downright miserly: two other offerings include "Woodward coin auction catalog twenty-five cents" and "Frossard coin auction twenty cents." This terse-ness is maddening when one notes that another lot offers "1856-Coin auction, 100 pages, fifty cents." Emmanuel Joseph Attinelli, in his classic work *Numisgraphics*, lists a mere seven auctions for 1856, the largest of which is only four pages long. Did Wylie have an unlisted and currently unknown major antebellum coin sale catalog? Could it have been a copy of the 1856 Winslow J. Howard Collection sale mentioned in Charles Ira Bushnell's *Arrangement of Tradesmen's Cards ...* but not listed in *Numisgraphics*?

I suspect, however, that the

"1856" date recorded by Wylie is an error and should read "1855." According to Attinelli, the Kline sale from that date mentioned earlier contained 92 pages, and its addenda (which was bound into Attinelli's copy), consisted of eight pages. If Wylie was offering a copy of the catalog for the Kline sale, it was a rare item, but not the major "find" of a Howard catalog.

The "Price List of Paper Money" is exactly identical to the "No. 7 List" in size and general format. It offers much of the same material as well: fractional, Confederate, Colonial, and Continental currency, as well as broken bank bills. There are, however, significant differences. In the Price List, Wylie's address is given as Troy Grove, Illinois, while in the No. 7 Price List, it is listed as Wheaton, Illinois. The typefaces differ as well, and that in the Price List appears to be somewhat earlier in style from that in the No. 7 Price List.

The introduction to the Price List of Paper Money shares some interesting biographical details about Mr. Wylie: "We have been over twenty-five years in the coin business" (this would date the list to about 1910), he begins, and by way of reference asserts, "we are president of the First National Bank of Triumph Ill., four miles from Troy Grove." This document also reveals Wylie to be a librar-

ian, for a list of 13 lots of catalogs under the heading of "archaeological" collections concludes with, "Any of these catalogs, priced, loaned ten days for fifteen cents." Under the heading "Coin Auction Catalogs," Wylie offers 37 lots assigned reference numbers in ascending, but not necessarily sequential, order (commencing with 18 and ending with 106). No great rarities are offered, with the most notable lot being number 95, "a Vicksburg, Miss. col. 1888."

The introduction to this section, on the other hand, does yield significant information. "We have the largest stock of coin auction catalogs in the U.S. ..." Wylie begins, and this was probably true, although Wylie's contemporary Henry Chapman possessed a significant hoard that probably was begun by John W. Kline (see your columnist's *The Curious Case of the Coin Collectors Kline*, Bowers and Merena Little Editions, p.17). Wylie offered 100 unpriced catalogs prior to 1900 for \$2.50 postpaid, or 50 different for \$1.60. He noted, "We also sell unpriced cats. and furnish copy prices very cheap." Finally, he offered an ongoing prices-realized service: "For your unpriced catalogs that you received from time to time, we will send you copy prices at fifty percent discount."

This section also contains corroboration of John W. Adams' identification of W. Elliot Woodward as the original source of the Wylie Hoard. While A.P. Wylie doesn't quite name Woodward as his source, he does offer such a vast selection of the Roxbury apothecary's stock that it does suggest he had secured the remainders: "Woodward was the greatest cataloger of the past, and we here quote some of his leading sales at fifteen cents each; and for twelve cents we will furnish you with a copy to price them with. We also sell complete priced copies new cheap."

These two lists document that A.P. Wylie was more than a hoarder; he was a significant numismatic literature dealer of his time. This moonlighting banker handled notable pieces as well as bulk lots and did much to preserve information about sales by means of copying lists of prices realized. Most significant, however, the lists demonstrate that Wylie was a key figure in what might be called the "medieval era" of numismatic literature: the 20 years or so on either side of the year 1900, when few were interested in the literature of American numismatics. A.P. Wylie deserves our thanks for the leading part he took during that time, in keeping alive the flame of numismatic knowledge. *

Between the Covers

—by Colonel Bill Murray, NLG

Junk. No one collects junk. Call it ephemera, and maybe it becomes collectable.

Ephemera for book collectors may be material related to the book, the author, the subject matter, or anything the owner or bookseller consider of sufficient interest to be kept with the book. A prices realized list, not published as a bound-in portion of a catalog, could be considered ephemeral; however, because of its importance as a catalog adjunct, it might be considered an essential component of the document.

But ... suppose a copy of Walter Breen's *Encyclopedia of United States Half Cents, 1793-1857* includes a letter from Jack Collins to Walter discussing plans for the superb photographic illustrations. Ephemeral, yes, but surely an exciting addition to be laid in the book. How about a letter from and photo of Armand Champa placed in the auction catalog for the sale of his library; or a series of hand-written, critical notes by Andrew Pollock in a copy of Judd's *United States Pattern, Experimental and Trial Pieces*; or a list of current references that supplement, or com-

plement, Bett's *American Colonial History Illustrated by Contemporary Medals*; or (an actual example) the mimeographed War Department letter that declassified the U.S. Army's *Technical Manual, Foreign Exchange Guide*—ephemeral to the subject matter, but hardly ephemeral to the legality of owning and sharing the book; or ...

I could go on. As Ian C. Ellis says in his *Book Finds, How to Find, Buy, and Sell Used and Rare Books*, "The possibilities are endless, and so are the chances for the avid collector and dealer."

Ephemeral items often enhance the value of the book. It depends, of course, on what the item is. Proof of this enhancement is easily seen if you examine the auction catalogs of any of our NBS dealer friends, you may find copies of two identical books, one of which has ephemeral matter offered, the other without. Check the price estimates for the two books ...

You can have fun searching for ephemeral items you consider interesting, useful or valuable additions to the books on your shelves. For example, I

have inserted bits of biographical information clipped from various publications in Pete Smith's *American Numismatic Biographies*. Walter Breen's *Complete Encyclopedia of U.S. and Colonial Coins* contains errors for which other authorities have

published corrections. I clip those articles to lay in at appropriate places.

Ephemera or junk, call it what you will. It can be fun, interesting and valuable both for information and dollars in a sale. *

Book Review:
The Soho Mint and the
Industrialization of Money
 —by Richard Doty

In 1786 copper coinage was struck for the Island of Sumatra on screw presses in a warehouse near London, supplied by the British East India Company. These coppers had a rather plain design, nothing more than the denomination in Arabic on one side and the East India Company balemark on the other. In 1849 an Australian grocery concern commissioned a copper token. The piece was struck using a steam-powered press and a closed collar die. This token had a raised rim, low relief, and a crisp, clean look. Furthermore, each piece was identical in size and weight.

As different as these two seem, they are as connected as night and day. The connection, as

you might have guessed, is the Soho Mint of Boulton and Watt.

Events surrounding these pieces, and what happened to the Mint between their existence is the subject of the latest book by Dr. Richard Doty, *The Soho Mint and the Industrialization of Money*. Described by Doty as "The biography of a mint," the book concerns itself with one aspect of the Industrial Revolution and two of its chief actors—Matthew Boulton and James Watt—and their part in reforming the coining industry and developing the first modern assembly line manufacturing process.

This book takes the reader step by step through the process that Boulton and Watt used to achieve their goal of bringing the

coining industry into modern times and sharing the resulting technology with the world.

As the title implies, there are really two stories in the book. One is about the Mint, the other about the coins. Doty skillfully ties the two together.

Biographical information about Boulton and Watt is presented in the introduction. A chapter on the overall background of the Soho Mint follows, and then a series of chapters, one for each country that obtained a mint from Boulton's firm.

Of special interest is a chapter detailing failed efforts by Boulton and Watt to establish mints in and strike coins for some countries. Some of these attempts are quite surprising, and as Dr. Doty writes, "formed a part of Soho's history and should be available to the interested reader." It has been said that failure breeds success, and this idea is no less true here. For the collector, the last chapter contains information about what Soho struck in the manner of coins, tokens and medals.

The book is well illustrated with halftone illustrations of the Soho Mint, other sites that figured in Soho's history, and especially the coins and tokens. Many of these are taken from Doty's own collection, with some housed in the cabinets of the Smithsonian Institution and the American Numismatic Society.

Instead of footnotes, which tend to distract some readers, Doty lists his sources in a more scholarly end-note format. Documentation is replete with quotes from Boulton's own papers and other printed material. Doty also obtained assistance from noted experts. Much has been written about Boulton and Watt and their contributions to the Industrial Revolution and American coinage, but this is the first book to present the whole history of the Soho Mint and truly put the contributions of Boulton and Watt into proper historical perspective.

It has also been said that long after the actors are gone, the play remains. So it is here. After Boulton and Watt have been gone for almost 200 years, we still have their coins and tokens to hold and enjoy, coins that are direct fore-runners of each and every coin we hold today, metallic reminders of the scene of the greatest developments in technological history. These are, as Dr. Doty appropriately states, lasting impressions in both senses of the word.

Priced at \$90 plus shipping and handling, *The Soho Mint and the Industrialization of Money* can be purchased from Charles Davis Numismatic Literature, P.O. Box 547, Wenham, MA 01984. The book is published by the Smithsonian Institution, The British Numismatic Society and Spink & Son.

—Carl C. Honoré

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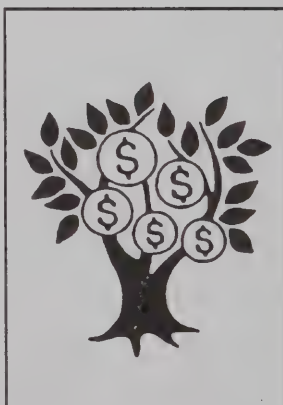
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Harry Bass vs. the Fuld Library

by George Fuld

As I think John Adams stated, when I collected numismatic books, catalogs and anything in print, between 1949 and 1970, I purchased or traded for anything that would be of possible interest. I also found that I had to bind everything as soon as possible, or they would get misplaced. This included the *Scrapbook*, *AJN*, *Elder Monthly*, *Mehl's*, *Numismatist* (including what I had from 1888 to 1893) and of course auction catalogs.

In 1970 we were living in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, and the library occupied two full bedrooms (shades of Armand C.). We made the decision to move to Baltimore and go into the stamp and coin business, and reluctantly we decided to sell the library. I contacted Harry Bass, who I knew somewhat well, and he said he would be in New York at the ANS the next week, and would come to Cherry Hill on Wednesday. Wednesday came and went, and no Harry. I called Dallas, reached Harry, and he said he simply forgot. He hopped a plane almost the next day, flew into Philadelphia and was at our apartment the following Monday. I still was working, and Harry spent the next two days going over the library. When I arrived home in the evening, I would price what I thought the books were worth, came up with a total at the end, gave discount for the lot and asked about \$25,000 for the lot (as I recall).

Harry said he would go home and think about it, and a day later, I received a two-page telegram offering me about one half what I asked.

My response by return mail was that the books would go to public auction with Frank Katzen (the only game in town), and he could buy what he wanted at the two auction sales.

My wife and I rented a truck, packed the books in boxes (it was a full truck) and drove them to Frank's house, where we unloaded and completely filled Frank's family room with cartons.

Frank wrote the two sales, which were held on August 15 (mostly the books), and November 27-28, 1971 (mostly auction sales), at the Sheraton Silver Spring, Maryland, which took much

HARRY BASS VS. THE CHAMPA LIBRARY (CONTINUED)

effort, as this was well before the advent of word processors. The audience was sparse, but Harry was there, along with about a dozen other buyers. I did not bid on any books, as I agreed to sell them fully unreserved. However, I sat next to Harry with a number of phoned-in bid sheets, including John Ford and Eric Newman. When the smoke settled, Harry spent around \$20,000 and obtained about one-third of the library. After that, Harry never dickered one iota on anything I ever sold him over the next few years.

As a matter of curiosity, the two sales grossed about \$43,000, and Armand said they would bring well over \$500,000 in today's world. Who would have thought it? *

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1) **Bailly, Alain:** *La Cote des Monnaies Françaises en or de Philippe IV à la III^e République*. La Rochelle: AB Finance, 1997. 137 pages + text illustrations. Also includes a reprint of the title page and 12 plates from Le Blanc's 1690 work titled: *Traité Historique des Monnoyes de France*. Octavo, card covers, new. Values, including recent auction record citations, for each coin in up to six grades. \$33. postpaid in the U.S.

2) **Castenholtz and Sons Numismatic Booksellers:** *The Numismatic Messenger*. Pacific Palisades, California. Complete set: Vol. 1, No. 1 through Vol. 2, No. 11/12 (Jan. 1971 through Dec. 1972). 24 numbers in 23 issues. Octavo, card covers. A quality publication offering authoritative articles, coins for sale, and their specialty, new and second-hand books. We have sold these in the past for \$40-50. We have purchased the entire remaining hoard and can offer as new complete sets for \$30. We have a very few sets, in a single red cloth volume, priced at \$50. Prices include postage in the U.S.; outside the U.S. add \$5.

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More on Budé's *De Asse* ...

by William Malkmus

Jn a stimulating article, "Guillaume Budé 1467-1540" (*The Asylum*, vol. XI, no. 4), author Pete Smith refers to Budé's text, *De Asse et Partibus Eius...*, as having gone through at least 16 Latin editions as well as others in translation subsequent to its original publication in 1514. The purpose of this note is to point out that Budé's book had a publishing history longer than might have been suspected, and that it may be accessible to *Asylum* readers who might be unaware of this fact.

The University of California's local library system does not have a copy of Budé's book, either bound or on microfilm. However, it does have microfilm copies of a book purportedly by John Selden (1584-1654), and entitled *Liber de Nummis*—in short form—the complete title is given on the title page. (See Figure 1 below).

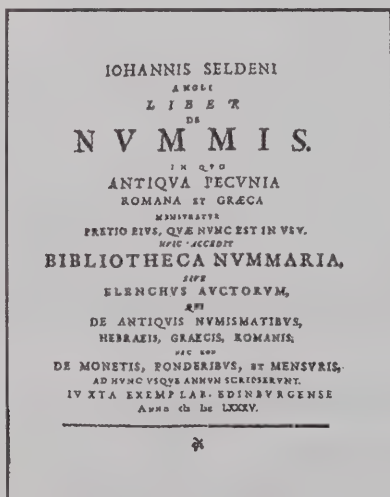


Figure 1. Title page of "John Selden," *Liber de Nummis*, 1685 edition.

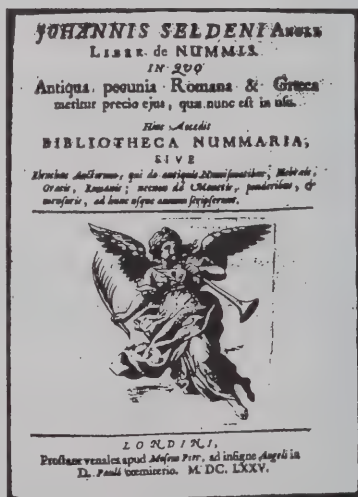


Figure 3. Bude's "De Asse..." starting on page 95 of 1685 *Liber de Nummis*.

MORE ON BUDÉ'S DE ASSE ... (CONTINUED)

Let us examine the contents of the 1685 edition of this work (with names as given in their Latinized forms):

Pages	Contents
1	Title page to volume dated 1685 ("MDCLXXXV")
2	(blank)
3	Iohannes Seldenus, "Liber de Nummis": Dedication (signed I. S., May 1642)
4	Lectori, signed "J. H."
5-20	"Liber de Nummis" text
21	Philippus Labbe, "Bibliotheca Nummaria": Title page (undated)
22-49	Part I
50-94	Part II
95	Gulielmus Budaeus, "De Asse ..." Title page, dated 1690 (sic: "MDCXC")
96	(blank)
97-102	Preface, dated 1514 ("M.D.XIV")
103-207	Book I
208-84	Book II
285-379	Book III
380-490	Book IV
491-716	Book V
717-22	Indices, Appendices (unpaginated): Index Autorum ("L. de N.", "B. N.")
723-843	Glossary ("De Asse ...")
744-802	Index Rerum ("De Asse ...")

It is apparent that Budé's text is a major portion (over three fourths) of this volume. Figure 2 shows the transition from the end of the text at page 94 to the title page of Bude's "De Asse ...," which consumes the next 622 pages of the volume.

This publication, dated 1685, is described in the catalog entry as a "literary imposture," noting it to be a reissue of the 1579 edition of a work of the same name by Alessandro Sardi

MORE ON BUDÉ'S DE ASSE ... (CONTINUED)

The naive present-day numismatic bibliophile cannot help wondering about the marketing decisions that were made in the 16th- and 17th-century printing industry: Just who comprised the potential readership of 800-page Latin tomes on esoteric studies into ancient economics; why would such a volume be padded with a 600-odd-page work by an earlier eminent scholar unacknowledged on the cover or title page; and did many wealthy people (literate or not) simply buy new books as they were produced to line their bookshelves? Fortunately for us, such publications appear to have been or to have been thought to be viable commercial enterprises. ♣

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The Development of the Coin Album Part Four (continued)

by David W. Lange

This installment continues from the last issue Part Four of the saga of Whitman coin folders with a look at some of the company's lesser-known products. The DELUXE COIN COLLECTION folders feature covers that have the same grained cardstock used for the ALL-IN-ONE line, but with dark brown paper in place of green. Each folder's spine includes a catalog number which is printed with the numbers stacked vertically to read top-to-bottom, while the older edition reads left-to-right and was printed parallel to the spine. Inside, the DELUXE COIN COLLECTION folder is printed in brown ink on cream facing paper with tan backing paper. The paper endflap of each folder is an exact reprinting of that used for the CURRENT ISSUES COIN COLLECTION, and only the product's title has been changed.

Once again, these folders were not advertised. I have no information about them, nor do I recall having seen them on sale at that time. I imagine they must have been priced at around \$2 or slightly more. Six titles were offered, and these included all current coin types save for the Eisenhower Dollar series. Unlike the CURRENT ISSUES COIN COLLECTION folders, this line included the silver issues of each series, which were otherwise current in clad form, such as the Roosevelt dime. The only exception is made for the Washington quarter series, in which two separate folders were produced for the silver and clad issues, respectively.

Sadly for Whitman, this concept was no more viable in 1977 than it had been five years earlier, and this line of folders rapidly disappeared into obscurity. Despite having been printed just 20 years ago, these folders are exceedingly rare today. There must have been just a single print run, yet I've managed to acquire five of the six titles.

Since its apparent failure with the DELUXE COIN COLLECTION line in 1977, Whitman has been content to rely on its traditional blue folders to capture the low-cost market for coin folders. As

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COIN ALBUM (CONTINUED)

PlastiClad (1956-62)

All boards measure 7 inches wide x 9 inches high. Grained, green face paper and backing paper, sheathed in two, interlocking plastic shells. Inscribed "©1956 WHITMAN PUB. CO. MADE IN U.S.A. RACINE, WIS."

9101	LINCOLN CENTS 1909-1924
9102	LINCOLN CENTS 1925-1939
9103	LINCOLN CENTS 1940-1953
9104	LINCOLN CENTS 1954 TO DATE
9150	CENTS
9111	BUFFALO NICKELS 1913-1924
9112	+ BUFFALO NICKELS 1925-1938
9106	+ JEFFERSON NICKELS 1938-1946
9107	+ JEFFERSON NICKELS 1947 TO DATE
9151	NICKELS
9113	+ MERCURY DIMES 1916-1931
9114	+ MERCURY DIMES 1934-1945
9115	+ ROOSEVELT DIMES 1946 TO DATE
9152	DIMES
9153	QUARTERS
9154	HALVES
9125	U.S. MINT SETS (before 1956)
9126	U.S. MINT SETS (starting 1956)
9127	U.S. MINT SETS (no captions)

related in Parts Two and Three of this series, a new edition of these was introduced in 1978 and remains current to the present day. As of this writing, however, Whitman (now a division of Golden Books) has announced plans to modify its current line of folders to include environmental protection features. This may result in yet another edition to collect.

The company's present line of WHITMAN CLASSIC albums was introduced almost simultaneously as a replacement for the older

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COIN ALBUM (CONTINUED)

ALL-IN-ONE (1958-65)

All folders measure 7 inches wide x 9 1/4 inches high. Grained, green covers and facing paper, with slick, green backing paper. First page inscribed "©1958 WHITMAN PUB. CO. MADE IN U.S.A. RACINE, WIS."

- 9203 + FLYING EAGLE-INDIAN CENT
- 9204 + LINCOLN CENTS (PSD)
- 9206 + SHIELD-LIBERTY-BUFFALO NICKELS (PDS)
- 9207 + JEFFERSON NICKELS (PSD)
- 9207 + JEFFERSON NICKELS (factory-wrapped bundle of six)
- 9242 + BARBER DIMS (PDS)
- 9210 + MERCURY-ROOSEVELT DIMS (PDS)
- 9243 BARBER QUARTERS
- 9244 + LIBERTY STANDING QUARTERS (PDS)
- 9215 + WASHINGTON QUARTER DOLLARS (PDS)
- 9245 BARBER HALF DOLLARS
- 9220 + LIBERTY STANDING HALF DOLLARS (PDS)
- 9221 + FRANKLIN HALF DOLLARS
- 9221 + FRANKLIN-KENNEDY HALF-DOLLARS (PDS)
- 9211 MORGAN DOLLARS 1878-1885
- 9212 + MORGAN DOLLARS 1886-1894
- 9213 MORGAN DOLLARS 1895-192
- 9214 PEACE DOLLARS
- 9240 + YEAR MINT SETS
- 9241 + UNITED STATES TYPE COLLECTION

BOOKSHELF line, which had dominated the upper end of the album market since 1961. In Part Five, I'll look at these two fine products and provide a complete listing of editions and titles.

The lists presented here include all titles I have found for each of the four Whitman board/folder lines described above. There is just a single edition of each. The ones I actually own and whose titles I have confirmed are marked with a plus sign (+). *

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COIN ALBUM (CONTINUED)

CURRENT ISSUES COIN COLLECTION (1972)

All folders measure 7 inches wide x 9 inches high. Grained, tan cover, with cream facing paper and grained, ivory backing paper. Endflap inscribed "Copyright ©1972 WESTERN PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC., RACINE, WISCONSIN Made in U.S.A."

9201		UNITED STATES CENTS STARTING 1959
9202		UNITED STATES NICKELS STARTING 1965
9203 ¹		UNITED STATES DIMES STARTING 1965
9204 ²	+	UNITED STATES QUARTERS STARTING 1965
9205	+	UNITED STATES HALF DOLLARS STARTING 1964

Notes:

1. Number previously used for ALL-IN-ONE FLYING EAGLE —INDIAN CENTS
2. Number previously used for ALL-IN-ONE LINCOLN CENTS

DELUXE COIN COLLECTION (1977)

All folders measure 7¹/₄ inches wide x 9¹/₄ inches high. Grained, brown cover, with cream facing paper and tan backing paper. Endflap inscribed "Copyright ©1977 WESTERN PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC., RACINE, WISCONSIN Made in U.S.A."

9261		UNITED STATES CENTS STARTING 1909
9262	+	UNITED STATES NICKELS STARTING 1938
9263	+	UNITED STATES DIMES STARTING 1946
9264	+	UNITED STATES QUARTERS 1932-1964
9265	+	UNITED STATES QUARTERS STARTING 1965
9266	+	UNITED STATES HALF DOLLARS STARTING 1948

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Research Aids: Catalogs, NBS Friends & Serendipity

by Ed Price

This article describes a research experience that illustrates (1) the value of old catalogs to research of current interest, (2) the helpfulness of Numismatic Bibliomania Society (NBS) members, particularly Scott Rubin and Michael Sullivan, and (3) serendipity.

Value of Catalogs

In October 1990, I acquired lot #6, a 1796 dime, at Stack's sale of Alan Lovejoy's dime collection. The description included:

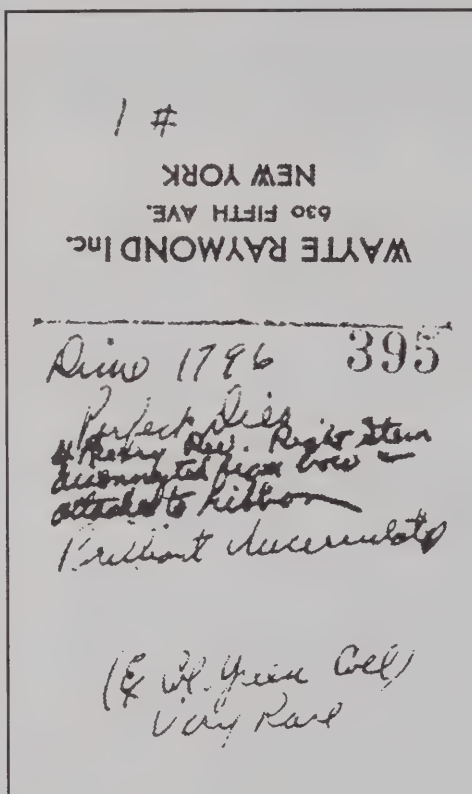
The rarest variety of the year. The JR Plate coin. Strong Extremely Fine, close to About Uncirculated in terms of detail. Light pinscratches, mostly on the obverse No Mint State examples of this variety are known to date. Col. E.H.R. Green Collection; Harold Bareford Collection (Stack's October 22, 1981, lot 132)

I try to track the provenance of any coin I own, so I was interested in learning more about the coin's history. The Bareford catalog description read in part, "About Uncirculated with prooflike surface. Needle-sharp in strike with a few old light obverse scratches Ex Col. Green, Wayte Raymond, lot 395 (graded Brill. Unc.), date unknown."

Fortunately, Alan Lovejoy had retained the Bareford envelope. Of much greater importance, Bareford had retained the Wayte Raymond envelope, and Alan had that, too. Stack's included both envelopes with the coin.

The Wayte Raymond envelope was to prove very useful—it is reproduced on the next page. I believe the lighter writing was probably on the envelope when Harold Bareford bought the coin and that the darker writing is likely Bareford's. The notation "#1" is in pencil and probably was added later—all other writing is in ink.

RESEARCH AIDS (CONTINUED)



That was what I had in 1990. I had limited experience with numismatic research. I had not yet started acquiring catalogs or other literature. I had joined the John Reich Collectors Society, but was only vaguely aware of the NBS.

Over the next few years, I looked at the few Wayte Raymond catalogs, but never saw one that included lot #395 as a 1796 dime. I was not making much progress. By 1995 I had largely given up—although I expected that someday I would get to the American Numismatic Society and look through its Wayte Raymond catalogs.

Then things started to pick up a little. At the Champa Saie in September 1995, I was able to look over 60 Wayte Raymond catalogs. Although I did not find the lot, I believed I had narrowed the number of catalogs down to the few not in that sale. In 1996, I attended the ANA Summer Seminar and spent many hours in the library on this and other research projects. I still did not find a Wayte Raymond catalog with lot #395 as a 1796 dime; however, I did take a big step forward.

I came to realize that even though the envelope had Wayte Raymond's name on it, the sale might well have been a Morgenthau sale that Raymond had cataloged. The ANA had many Morgenthau catalogs, but none yielded the right lot. At that stage, I was both hopeful and discouraged.

RESEARCH AIDS (CONTINUED)

NBS Friends

The next step on my critical path was being introduced to Michael Sullivan by Charlie Horning. Over time, I became aware that Michael knew a lot about Wayte Raymond material (an understatement if ever there was one!). I told Michael my tale and sent him a copy of the Wayte Raymond envelope in March 1997. He had several suggestions, two of which were critical:

- From the address on the envelope—630 Fifth Ave., New York—he was able to narrow down the possible Raymond or Morgenthau sales—and he checked some of the Raymond catalogs I had not seen.
- He suggested I ask Scott Rubin for help.

In July 1997, I went back to the ANA Summer Seminar and checked the catalogs in the range Michael had suggested. I still did not find the right one.

At the ANA convention in New York in August 1997, I asked Scott Rubin if he had any suggestions. After the show, I sent him a letter describing the puzzle and almost immediately received an E-mail from Scott indicating that lot #395 in Morgenthau's 1/27/43 sale was an uncirculated 1796 dime.

The puzzle seemed to be solved. Soon after that I acquired the catalog. The description of lot #395 is "Perfect dies. Brilliant uncirculated."—identical to the wording on the envelope. The puzzle was solved!

At the ANA meeting in Cincinnati in March 1998, I saw Michael and thanked him for his help—especially for leading me to Scott. Soon after, Michael provided the last bit of missing information—lot #395 realized \$23 at the Morgenthau sale in 1943. Bareford presumably also paid a buyer's fee—but he (his estate) still did well financially, selling the coin at \$8,000 to Alan Lovejoy in 1981. The compound annual rate of return to Bareford was over 15%, presumably with no tax on the gain. Alan did not do nearly as well financially, selling the coin in 1990 for a hammer bid of \$9,500, with the gain being taxable. However, Alan had the enjoyment of owning a rare variety that was plated in the book he co-authored. Bareford likely did not know it was a rare variety, since that information was not readily available until the dime book¹ was published in late 1983.

RESEARCH AIDS (CONTINUED)

Serendipity

You may remember the introduction to this article and wonder how it illustrates serendipity. Now, for the rest of the story...

About a month after I acquired the 1/27/43 Morgenthau catalog, I realized that in my excitement over lot #395, I had not looked at the rest of the catalog. The real prize—and the real puzzle—in this catalog is contained in lots 452 through 479—the early half dimes.

I collect and study early half dimes (1792-1805) and have done so seriously for about 10 years. I am particularly interested in the Flowing Hair half dimes of 1794 and 1795. In 1883 Newlin² listed 11 varieties of Flowing Hair half dimes. Steigerwalt apparently discovered another variety (now known as Valentine-10) around 1900. He reconfigured some card-covered versions of Newlin's book to include this discovery, as well as poor copies of the plates from the cloth-covered version of the book. Valentine³ included 14 varieties in his 1931 book. None have been discovered since. Many of the varieties are rare, and all are fairly expensive. Before 1997, I believed that the only complete set to have been assembled and/or sold at public auction was included in the Milton A. Holmes collection, sold by Stack's in 1960. In 1988 Breen⁴ asserts, "The Milton Holmes collection (1960) contained the first complete set ever assembled." ... An eastern collector completed the set in early 1997, and another eastern collector completed the set in early 1998.

Lots 453 through 467 of the 1/27/43 Morgenthau sale comprise a complete set of Flowing Hair half dimes (15 coins, including two die states of one variety). Twelve of the 14 varieties are listed as uncirculated. For the Draped Bust series (1796-1805), all but three of the then-known varieties are present ... The 1802 half dime is not present. The Holmes collection included all but four of the varieties generally known in 1960, also without the 1802. From the descriptions, several of the Holmes coins could easily have come from the Morgenthau sale.

I believe that the 1/27/43 Morgenthau sale likely includes the most significant collection of early half dimes sold at public auction during this century. The catalog provides no hint as to

RESEARCH AIDS (CONTINUED)

the provenance of the collection. I have a few ideas, but they are not based on clear facts:

- Some of the coins sound like Valentine plate coins, so that collection may somehow be involved.

- The 1796 dime envelope mentions Colonel Green. He is surely not known as a variety collector; however, he is believed to have purchased a significant portion of the Waldo Newcomer collection. Newcomer had an extensive collection and was interested in varieties.

This Morgenthau catalog also includes many interesting varieties of early dimes and half dollars. More study would almost surely yield additional interesting information. *

Sources

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A man never gets
so much good out of
a book as when he
possesses it.

~ SIR ARTHUR HILPS ~



NUMISMATIC BIBLIOMANIA SOCIETY OFFICERS

Vice President

David Sklow
1260 Smith Ct.
Rocky River, OH 44116
sdsklow@ameritech.net

President

Wayne Homren
1810 Antietam St.
Pittsburgh, PA 15206
whomren@coinlibrary.com

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Dave Hirt
5911 Quinn Orchard Rd.
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Members of the Board

Bob Metzger, P.O. Box 307, Lakeville, MN 55044-0307, ultrabob@gte.net
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Bill Murray, 7400 Crestway, Apt. 1423, San Antonio, TX 78239, billmur13@aol.com
Joel Orosz, 4300 Old Field Trail, Kalamazoo, MI 49008, jjo@wkkf.org
Scott Rubin, P.O. Box 6885, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648, P.ScottRubin@worldnet.att.net
Tom Sheehan, P.O. Box 1477, Edmonds, WA 98020, twsheeh@ibm.net

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Publication Editor: Marilyn Reback

P.O. Box 1110
Monument, CO 80132
anaedi@money.org

Editor-in-Chief: Bob Metzger

P.O. Box 307
Lakeville, MN 55044-0307
ultrabob@gte.net

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President's Message — by Wayne Homren

It is an honor and a pleasure to serve as president of the Numismatic Bibliomania Society. I've been involved with NBS since the beginning, first as a member, then later as a Board member and most recently as vice president. It was a pleasure to serve with our immediate past president, Michael Sullivan, who led our group through a number of transitions, most notably the ratification of our new Constitution and Bylaws, and bringing Marilyn Reback on board as our new editor.

The new Board was installed at the recently concluded ANA convention near Chicago, where the attendees of our annual meeting were treated to interesting presentations by ANA Librarian Nawana Britenriker, ANS Executive Director Ute Wartenberg and bibliophile John Burns.

Shortly after the convention, Board members faced their first major hurdle, when they learned the company that prints *The Asylum* was getting out of the printing business. After some delay, a new printer was found (Stanton Publishing), and the results are in your hands. With this latest transition behind us, we can return to our regular printing schedule.

Throughout out these periods of change in our organization, we have continued to regularly publish the *E-Sylum*, our weekly E-mail newsletter, which now reaches well over 200 bibliophiles around the world. It is a handy way to keep in touch with our hobby and each other in the periods between *Asylum* printings and our annual and regional meetings. If you have access to an E-mail account and haven't already subscribed, I urge you to join us. Send your request to me at whomren@coinlibrary.com.

We have a number of new members in the organization, and I would like to close this message with a warm welcome to all of you—we're very glad to have you aboard and hope you enjoy your membership. It is a very interesting and rewarding hobby that we enjoy, and among the finer pleasures is sharing our interests with kindred spirits such as yourselves.

Welcome to the NBS!

New Members

Michael N. Bird, Riverside, CA
 Allan Davisson, Cold Spring, MN
 Rick Day, Oneonta, NY
 Merrill F. Erskine, Warren, PA
 Steve Hayden, Mauldin, SC
 Lawrence J. Lee, Lincoln, NE
 Karl Jay Leippe, Farmington, NY
 W. Douglas Logan, Athens, AL

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 —David Hirt, Secretary-Treasurer

Letters to the Editor

Erratum

In the article, "More on Budés De Asse ..." by William Malkmus—*The Asylum*, Vol. XVII, No. 2 (Summer 1999), pp. 18-21—two figure captions were transposed. The figures were numbered correctly in the order: Fig. 1, Fig. 3, Fig. 2 (1 and 3 fit on one page; 2 on another). However, please note that the captions for 2 and 3 were transposed.

Something About Coins

Upon arriving at the spring Pennsylvania Association of Numismatists show in Pittsburgh, I was alerted by Lancaster, Pennsylvania, numismatist John Eshbach to the availability of an early numismatic publication. I immediately went to the dealer's table and purchased the publica-

tion *Something About Coins* by E.I. Barra. Published in San Francisco in 1863, it certainly is the pioneer numismatic publication of the West Coast. Attinelli lists it on page 103 of his work.

Something About Coins is a 31-page pamphlet that starts with an explanation of the science of numismatics and gives information of coins through the ages, finishing with American coins. Massachusetts Oak and Pine Tree coins are discussed, along with Maryland and Connecticut money. The United States Mint is discussed, and branch mints are mentioned. Interestingly enough, a branch mint is listed as being in Auraria, Pike's Peak, Colorado Territory. It has been suggested that this was the Clark-Gruber operation or a U.S. Assay Office.

The local San Francisco Mint gets several pages, and its operations are described. It states that "Persons desirous of visiting the mint can do so any day the mint is in operation between the hours of 9 and 12 o'clock in the forenoon." Following this is a list of American and foreign coins in the author's collection.

Inside the front and rear covers are ads from Barra's Business at 118 First Street, San Francisco. Advertised is pure New England Rum at 37½ cents per bottle. It is claimed that washing in it would give you a brilliant complexion and luxuriant, glossy hair. It does not men-

tion what drinking it would do.

All in all, *Something About Coins* is quite an interesting early numismatic publication.

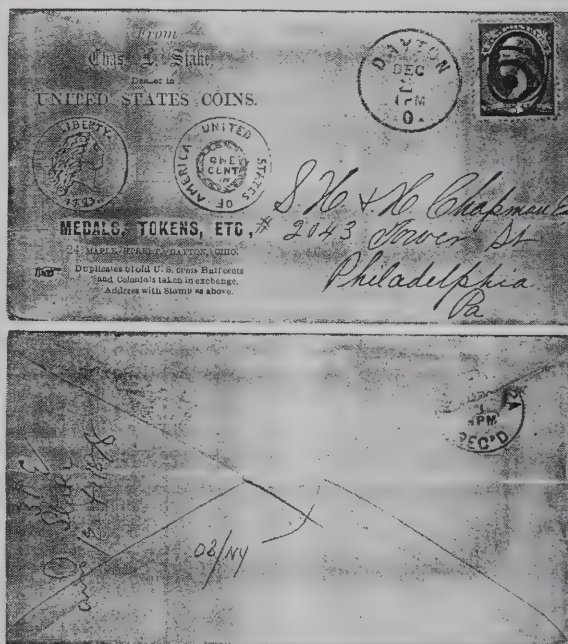
—David Hirt

Early Dealer Price Lists and Stationery

I collect early coin- and stamp-dealer price lists, as well as their covers (the envelopes in which they mailed their coins, stamps or price lists). I would enjoy hearing from others interested in this area, generally in earlier dealers and preferably pre-1900.

Fred L. Buza, P.O. Box 4485,
Ocala, FL 34478-4485

This envelope was mailed by Chas. Stake of 24 Maple Street in Dayton, Ohio, to other dealer(s), S.H. & H. Chapman at their earliest business address, 2043 Tower St. in the Manayunk section of Philadelphia. Little is known of Stake, who was one of the first dealers outside the Boston—New York—Philadelphia area. He conducted a series of auction sales in the 1880s, but the catalogs almost never appear for sale.



The Printer's Devil — by Joel J. Orosz
DANIEL GROUX'S "DESCRIPTIVE
CATALOGUE" FOR THE MARYLAND
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
AND THE COINS OF JOEL BARLOW

The first sale of the Harry W. Bass Jr. numismatic library, adroitly conducted by NBS co-founder George Frederick Kolbe on December 12, 1998, contained a treasure trove of biblionumismatic rarities. A pair of these, the wrappers of which are pictured in full color on pages 58 and 59 of the catalog, are all that remain of two grand designs launched by Daniel E. Groux, a promoter of outsized ambitions and pint-sized accomplishments, who touted himself as America's first and only "professor of numismatics."

Lot#146 offered the prospectus for a lottery to dispose of the "best collection of medals and coins in the United States." Lot#147 was a prospectus for a three-volume "numismatical history of the United States."

Groux was always better prospectively than retrospectively; the lottery fizzled and the numismatical history remained unwritten. There was, however, one significant project, little-remem-

bered today, that Groux actually completed. Although not included with the prospectuses in the first Bass library sale, this obscure piece of ephemera reveals that Daniel E. Groux had at least some numismatic substance under the many layers of bunkum he displayed to the outside world.

Part II of Emmanuel J. Attinelli's indispensable *Numisgraphics* chronologically documents "catalogues and price lists issued by institutions, dealers, or private individuals." Every item mentioned in the first eight pages, covering the years from 1764 to 1854, is a catalog of institutional holdings. The sole entry under the year 1851 is "Descriptive Catalogue of Coins, Greek and Roman Medals Belonging to the Historical Society of Maryland by D.E. Groux."

This "Descriptive Catalogue" is rarer than either of the prospectuses (which are rare indeed). NBS member Charles Davis, in his invaluable *American*

Numismatic Literature, lists no auction appearances for the Descriptive Catalogue from 1980-91 and a mere one apiece for each of the prospectuses.

The Descriptive Catalogue is a substantial octavo work, 41 pages long, describing a notable early American coin collection of 251 pieces, primarily comprising ancient and world coinage. Despite the focus on Greek and Roman medals in the title, the bulk of the collection consists of French coins and medals (108 pieces of the latter as compared to 38 of the former). The final page carries the following note: "Described and Arranged by D.E. Groux, Professor of Numismatics & C., Washington, D.C."

The self-styled professor did a creditable job of cataloging the coins. While the majority of the items are briefly described, some are annotated rather extensively. An example is item number 149, a medal of Gustavus Adolphus, king of Sweden, which merits a half-page description. Most of Groux's commentary is derived from observation of the pieces, but occasionally he interjects other data. For example, item 160, a medal of Clotaire I, king of France, asserts that the king was born in the year 500. Groux notes that this is uncertain and adds that Clotaire I succeeded his father on the throne.

Historians would quibble with part of this; Clotaire I was king of

the Merovingian Franks, who united the three Frankish kingdoms of Austrasia, Neustria and Burgundy. However, since the Merovingians were lineal ancestors of the French, Groux had at least the right idea.

The collection contains a small but interesting assortment of American items, ranging from the commonplace to the caviar of the series:

- 52. Liberty Parent of Science and Industry, 1792 (Birch Cent).
- 53. 1851 Large Cent.
- 140. Washington Seasons Medal (The Farmer Medal).
- 141. Washington Seasons Medal (The Family Medal).
- 142. Jefferson Indian Peace Medal.
- 143. Horatio Gates Medal.
- 144. 1851 Silver Three-Cent Piece.
- 145. Massachusetts 1652 XII Pence.

In addition to the above list, items 81 and 82 add an intriguing, if perhaps spurious, wrinkle to the annals of American colonial coinage. Both are coins of Denmark, one dated 1740, struck, according to Groux, for a short-lived Danish colony in America. This "colony" is not mentioned in the standard histories of Pre-Revolutionary America, and one wonders by what authority the good professor made this claim.

Groux's facility with languages (he was fluent in French, German and English, and could read Greek and Latin) helped him immensely in compiling the catalog. While hardly, by modern

standards, a first-rate piece of numismatic scholarship, it still ranks as a workmanlike effort, and by 1851 standards was state of the art. It is no surprise that the Maryland Historical Society would call upon America's only "professor of numismatics" in nearby Washington to catalog its coin and medal collection. This begs the question: Where did they get it?

The answer is found within the pages of yet another of Attinelli's Part II entries under the year 1854: "Catalogue of the Manuscripts, Maps, Medals, Coins ... of the Maryland Historical Society," by Lewis Mayer. It should be noted that Lewis Mayer is not to be confused with William S. Frederick Mayers, an early member of the American Numismatic Society, and author of "The Literature of American Numismatics," the first article on that subject published in the United States (in *Norton's Literary Letter* number 3 for 1859).

Lewis Mayer was the Maryland Historical Society's assistant librarian, and he produced a work at once better organized and less satisfyingly described than Groux's 1851 effort. Mayer's work is more systematically cataloged than that of Groux, with additional external information brought to bear upon the artifacts. However, since it covers many more subjects than the numismatic collection, it reduces

the cataloging of all pieces to an unsatisfying compendium description; for example, "Vols 17 and 18, 24 Silver Medals of Eminent Frenchmen, from 1617 to 1723." Mayer simply omits Groux's descriptions of individual coins.

Fortunately though, Mayer does record a number of important facts about the coins:

This fine numismatic collection is comprised in 19 volumes, numbering in all 351 specimens, the larger portion being silver, in fine preservation. The Medals and Coins are firmly set in strong boards, so as to exhibit the obverse and reverse of each through the glasses which cover both sides of the case, and protect the specimens from touch or injury.

Interestingly, the method of display foreshadowed the system employed several decades later by M.L. Beistle and copied by Wayte Raymond in his "National" line of coin albums. Beistle and Raymond replaced the wood with cardboard and the glass with celluloid slides, but the principle was exactly the same (see David Lange's article in *The Asylum*, Summer 1994).

Mayer then reveals the provenance of the coins: "The collection was chiefly formed in Europe by Joel Barlow, minister to France, and author of our American epic, 'The Columbiad.'" At his death, it passed to his brother-in-law, the late Col.

Bomford, U.S.A. [United States Army] upon whose decease General Towson, U.S.A. became its owner."

Joel Barlow (1754-1812) was a member of that remarkable generation of Americans who made a revolution, founded a nation, and still had time left over to be men of business and culture. According to James Woodress in *A Yankee's Odyssey: The Life of Joel Barlow*, young Joel's college buddy was Noah Webster of dictionary fame; a close friend later in life was Robert Fulton, who invented the steamboat. Barlow served as a chaplain in Washington's army and briefly practiced law after the peace of Paris.

As these two callings illustrate, Joel Barlow successfully combined God and Mammon as few ever have. He earned a fortune in the shipping business while living in Europe during the 1790s, and back in America in 1800, he championed Washington's idea of forming a national university in the nation's new capital, the District of Columbia. Although Barlow failed during his lifetime, his friends kept pressing the point and established Columbian College, which evolved into George Washington University.

Barlow gained his greatest fame as a poet, publishing in 1787 "The Vision of Columbus," an American epic poem in nine

volumes. Barlow revised and republished this poem (by now a stupendous 3,675 couplets) 20 years later under the title Mayer mentioned, "The Columbiad." Barlow had a notable career as a diplomat, negotiating with the Dey of Algiers (before Jefferson finally sent the Navy to deal with the Barbary Pirates) and serving as American Minister to France from mid 1811 until his death at the end of 1812. President Madison was so convinced of the importance of the ambassador's mission, he ordered the frigate *Constitution* (better known as "Old Ironsides") to convey Barlow to France.

Returning to Mayer's account of the history of the coin collection, he recorded that

General Towson immediately proceeded, with the assistance of Mr. D.E. Groux, of Washington, who is said to be a very competent Numismatist, to classify and arrange the entire collection, as well as to prepare an ample *catalogue raisonné* of the whole, which he caused to be printed and presented with the Coins and Medals to the Maryland Historical Society in March, 1852.

It is interesting that Mayer qualified his assessment of Groux: "who is said to be a very competent numismatist." It appears the assistant librarian was not completely impressed by Groux's scholarship. Nevertheless, he relied entirely on

Groux's work in the "Descriptive catalogue" to present his own condensed description of the collection. Mayer finished his annotation by mentioning the medal of Gustavus Adolphus "as an admirable specimen of minute and elegant art." But he concluded that for historical purposes, the series of medals depicting French sovereigns and illustrious men forms "the most valuable portion of the collection."

The French origin of the bulk of the collection is no coincidence, since Barlow considered France his second homeland and even maintained a residence in Paris. Mayer's statement that "The collection was chiefly formed in Europe, by Joel Barlow, Minister to France," implies that Barlow collected the coins in 1811-12, during his ambassadorship. This seems quite unlikely, for his diplomatic term in France was brief, the press of his duties was severe, and his death came suddenly and unexpectedly, while hastening to an audience with Napoleon during the emperor's disastrous 1812 retreat from Moscow.

It seems far more likely that Barlow gathered the coins during an earlier European sojourn, perhaps while he was resident there during the 1790s. And, as the presence of the large cent and trime of 1851 indicate, someone added a few pieces to the collection long after Barlow's demise.

The Barlow-Towson collection described by Groux does not contain paper money, and for good reason. According to NBS member Eric P. Newman's definitive *Early Paper Money of America*, the State of Rhode Island in Summer 1780 issued a total of £59,000 in legal-tender Lawful Money and legal-tender Bills of Credit, followed by another issue of £100,000 in legal-tender Bills of Credit in 1786. Barlow, then living in Hartford, joined with a small group of friends to attack this paper money policy. The friends sent to the papers, under the name "American Antiquities," several installments of a satirical poem assaulting, among other things, the paper money issues. The poem, in obvious homage to Alexander Pope's "Dunciad," was entitled "The Anarchiad." Referring to Rhode Island's paper money, it proclaimed that people with any sense would, "like Lot from Sodom, from Rhode Island run." The authors were at first called the "Wicked Wits," but over time the name "Connecticut Wits" has stuck.

If Barlow stepped on a few toes in Rhode Island, he trod upon many more on the international stage. One of those whose feet were thus flattened was, interestingly enough, another member of the small tribe of early American numismatists. In 1798 America and France were

lurching toward war. President John Adams had sent a new ambassador known to be hostile to the French revolutionary government, which refused to accept him. Adams sent a three-man commission to negotiate a way out of the impasse, but French Foreign Minister Talleyrand snubbed the three, instead sending an equal number of shadowy agents to treat with them.

These agents, known to history as "X, Y, and Z," demanded a large American loan for the French government, and a \$240,000 bribe for Talleyrand. When this demand became public knowledge, Americans were infuriated. The slogan of the day, which would have many later numismatic echoes, was "Millions for Defense, Not One Cent for Tribute." Adams put the American Navy to sea and recalled George Washington from retirement to lead the Army, but he also worked courageously to prevent a complete breakdown in relations.

In the absence of an American ambassador to France, the ongoing negotiations to avoid war were led on the U.S. side by Adams' Minister to Holland, William Vans Murray. A Marylander and a staunch Federalist in politics, Murray was also a numismatist. On July 22, 1790, Murray sent young Robert Gilmor Jr. a package of ancient coins he had collected while

studying law in London. In all probability, this gift was the precipitating event that launched Gilmor on a coin-collecting career that led him to nearly complete a collection of U.S. coinage by date, and to become, along with Matthew Stickney and Joseph Mickley, one of the "big three" numismatists in the United States during the first half of the 19th century.

Murray and Barlow locked horns over the latter's unofficial efforts at peacemaking. Although he held no diplomatic post in 1798, Barlow took it upon himself to head off war between the two countries he dearly loved. Murray considered this a traitorous act and said of Barlow and another American helping him, "they are mud on the lion's mane."

Despite the ill will, the combined effort of the two numismatists, coupled with Adams' principled leadership, bore fruit, and neither the French nor the Americans loosed the dogs of war. Not that Barlow was thanked for his efforts; in fact, Congress promptly passed a law prohibiting private citizens from negotiating with foreign governments on the nation's behalf.

Thirteen years after Barlow helped avert war with France, he was named ambassador to that nation and once again struggled to keep the United States at peace. Once more, he kept the

Americans and the French from crossing swords, but his efforts to prevent war with England were unsuccessful. Barlow died in 1812, disappointed that America was once again trading shots with its mother country.

Mayer was correct about the subsequent ownership of the late ambassador's collection of coins and medals. Barlow's wife, Ruth Baldwin Barlow, had a younger sister, Clara Baldwin Bomford. Her husband, Colonel George Bomford, was Chief of Ordnance of the United States Army. The Colonel and Clara purchased Kalorama, which had been the Washington, D.C., home of Joel and Ruth Barlow. Kalorama, which no longer exists, was located on a hill near Rock Creek, close to the intersection of 22nd and S Streets. Today, the Woodrow Wilson House Museum is nearby, and just to the north the name endures in Kalo-

rama Circle, Kalorama Road and Kalorama Avenue. By 1845 Col. Bomford had passed away, and Clara sold Kalorama, spending the rest of her years with her daughter in Maine. It is probable that the coins passed to General Towson around this time, possibly as a bequest.

So ends the tale of Joel Barlow's collection, but the saga of Daniel E. Groux and his ever-failing grand plans was just beginning. In the nearly quarter century left to him after 1851, he never again produced a numismatic work of such substance. Mayer's critical jab at Groux was the first of many. William S. Strobridge, when selling the remnants of the Groux collection in 1874, charitably called him "the fond old dreamer." More accurate, perhaps, in light of his entire career, would have been something along the lines of the "con job schemer." ❁

Teenager Wins Contest with Essay on the History of American Numismatic Literature

Fourteen-year-old Michael Berkman, a collector from Maryland, won first prize—a \$5,000 college scholarship—in the fourth annual Professional Coin Grading Service (PCGS) essay contest for high school students. His winning, 3,500-word essay was titled "The History of American Numismatic Literature."

Berkman is writing a book about United States proof gold coins, which he plans to have published next year. "Books are an integral part of my coin collecting," he said. For information about next year's contest, contact the Professional Coin Grading Service at P.O. Box 9458, Newport Beach, CA 92658. ❁

Between the Covers

— by Colonel Bill Murray, NLG

“Format rhymes with doormat.”

—John Carter

Sextodesimo, vicesimo-quarto, tricesimo-secundo. They all have to do with the format of a book. Format, according to my Oxford English Dictionary, is “the shape and size of a book.” My Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary tells me format is “the shape, size and general make up (as of something printed).” John Carter’s *ABC for Book Collectors* says it is “used to indicate the size of a volume in terms of the number of times the original printed sheet has been folded to form its constituent leaves.”

Does everybody understand? Carter also tells us these strange terms are “the technical terms of the paper trade which provide the names—such as pott and elephant ... for the sub-categories of size. Most booksellers’ catalogues nowadays dispense with a terminology unfamiliar to, and unnecessarily technical for, the majority of their readers.”

Change the final word of that last quote to “customers,” and I think you will see why our NBS-member booksellers are kind to

us by the technical words they use to describe format. I won’t presume to guess their thoughts about our knowledge of books. It may best be left unstated. I know I’m not going to ask what they think of my knowledge of books.

Back to Carter. He gives us a few more words and abbreviations, some of which may be a bit more familiar. *Folio* (*Fo*); *Quarto* (*Qto*, *4to*); *Octavo* (*Oct*, *8vo*); *duodecimo* (*12mo*). Fortunately for us, most of our bookseller friends put the words, abbreviations and their meanings in a table in their catalogs. Look at these two examples:

Folio: 13 inches, 33 cm

Folio - 13”+

Quarto (*4to*): 12 in., 30cm

4to - 12”+

Octavo (*8vo*): 9 in., 23cm

8vo - 9”+

12mo: 7-8 inches, 18-20cm

12mo - 7”+

16 mo: 6-7 inches, 15-18cm

16mo - 6”+

24 mo: 5-6 inches, 13-15cm

24mo - 5”+

32 mo: 4-5 inches, 10-13cm
32mo - 4"+

Look at the quote that started this little dissertation, and you can determine where each of them fit into the above tables.

One more thing from Carter, this about pronunciation: "sexto-decimo = sixteenmo; vicesimo-quarto = twentyfourmo; and tricesimo-seculo = thirtytwomo."

NBS booksellers, thank you. *

The Numismatic Bibliomania Society Membership Application

YES, I hereby apply for membership in the Numismatic Bibliomania Society. I understand that I will receive the Society's quarterly journal, *The Asylum*.

Name: _____

Street: _____

City : _____ **State:** ____ **Zip:** ____

Phone: _____

Other numismatic organizations I have been affiliated with: _____

My collecting interests are: _____

Membership dues are \$15.00 in North America, \$20.00 elsewhere. Members receive all copies of the current volume of *The Asylum*.

Return application with payment to:

NUMISMATIC BIBLIOMANIA SOCIETY

DAVID HIRT, SECRETARY

5911 QUINN ORCHARD ROAD

FREDERICK, MD 21701

I hereby make application for membership in the Numismatic Bibliomania Society, subject to the bylaws of the organization.

Signature of Applicant

Date

***E-Sylum* Complements *Asylum* for Numismatic Literature Collectors**

by William T. Gibbs

It might seem unusual that an organization of collectors who love the feel and smell of old books would sponsor a weekly online journal, but it is not at all out of the ordinary for the Numismatic Bibliomania Society. NBS does embrace the traditional publishing field. It publishes *The Asylum*, a traditional magazine featuring articles on numismatic books, auction catalogs and other forms of numismatic literature.

However, it also embraces the World Wide Web and the Internet by publishing a weekly online journal, *The E-Sylum*. Online subscribers subscribe to *The E-Sylum*, which arrives weekly (every Sunday) in their E-mail. Each online issue features research tips, requests for research help, comments from subscribers and other useful information.

The June 13 issue is typical. It features a report from subscriber David Cassel and the status of his research into U.S. postage currency patterns for a book that he is writing. In particular, Cassel notes that an article about his research in the June 14 issue of *Coin World* resulted in the unexpected contact with the owner of a coin he had wanted to examine. Cassel also received useful research advice via *The E-Sylum*.

Cassel wrote in the online journal: "The owner of the J-325a [postage currency pattern] contacted me through the *Coin World* article just as you did. As happy as I am to have found this unique coin, I am equally happy to have found you and your organization. I am grateful for your offer of assistance.

"Maybe you would care to ask your members to advise me of their holdings of postage currency coins of 1863 and the related dated coins of 1868 and 1869. There are still other coins that have been cataloged that may have been incorrectly attributed. Also, I am trying to provenance as many as I can." Cassel made an additional request for information from owners of 20th century auction catalogs offering lots of postage currency postage.

A request for help made in the previous issue may have paid off for the researcher. Russ Logan notes that he can help Pete Smith, who asked for help in the June 6 issue on Civil War

patriotic envelopes.

Earlier this year, a request for research assistance from a *Coin World* staff member led him to a monograph on John Leonard Riddell. Riddell was a truly remarkable man—a medical doctor, biologist, inventor, New Orleans postmaster, official at the New Orleans Mint and one of the original owners of one of four 1861 Confederate half dollars. The help provided from the request made to *The E-Sylum* has proven invaluable in researching the feature, which will be published later this year in *Coin World*.

The immediacy of the Internet and World Wide Web appears to be one the strongest benefits of this online journal. Members can communicate with each other instantaneously via e-mail. The NBS is a nonprofit organization promoting numismatic literature. For more information, see the society's Web site at <http://www.coinbooks.org/>. You can join the NBS and obtain a subscription to the printed journal, *The Asylum*, as well as subscribe to the online edition. Contact Dave Hirt, NBS Secretary-Treasurer, 5911 Quinn Orchard Road, Frederick, MD 21701. *

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The Numismatist: The First Six Volumes. Where Are They Now?

by David J. Sklow

In 1888 a country doctor in Monroe, Michigan, started a small numismatic journal that was to become the cornerstone of the American Numismatic Association. Dr. George Francis Heath printed the first six years of the new journal on a small, hand press at his home. Dr. Heath would become the founder of the ANA in 1891 and the journal he started, its official organ, entitled "The Numismatist."

It is now over 100 years since the first six volumes of *The Numismatist* were printed, so I ask you, where are they today? Many theories circulate among bibliophiles as to the actual number printed of each volume.

The first three volumes of *The Numismatist* were produced and distributed before the American Numismatic Association drew its first breath. The good Dr. Heath was a part-time coin dealer and sent *The Numismatist* to anyone who bought coins from him; it also was offered by subscription. It is not well known that Dr. Heath printed a listing in *The Numismatist* titled, "Our Numismatic Directory." This directory had no relationship to ANA membership, but everyone on the list received a copy of *The Numismatist*.

The following statement appeared on page 27 of the February 1891 issue: "Remember that the Numismatist goes regularly or irregularly to every name in this directory; and that a yearly advertisement will reach over 700 coin collectors." By 1893 the Directory had more than 900 names, and the 177th member joined the ANA. Another editorial by Dr. Heath in May 1891 said, "A liberal number of free copies are each month distributed among coin collectors that are not subscribers."

It is the statements of Dr. Heath himself that lead to the conclusion that possibly more than 1,000 copies of each issue of 1892 and 1893 were produced. The quantities for Volume 3 in 1891 are surely smaller than those of 1892 and 1893, but

THE NUMISMATIST: THE FIRST SIX VOLUMES, WHERE ARE THEY NOW? (CONT.)

still a sizeable issue. The following appeared on page 2 of the January 15, 1891, issue: "Our numbers February, May, August and November, will contain advertisements. Extra editions will be published and every known coin collector reached." In February 1891, a limited edition, quarterly version of *The Numismatist* was introduced. It was 24 pages and cover, post-paid for 12 cents.

The first two volumes—1888-89 and 1890—were produced in much smaller print runs. These volumes still were available from Dr. Heath as late as July 1893, as stated in that issue of *The Numismatist* (page 7): "Positively the last chance. The editor offers the following remaining three first volumes of the Numismatist: Volume 1 (seven copies on hand) per volume post free 25 cents. Volume 2 (nine copies on hand) per volume post free 25 cents. Volume 3 (eleven copies on hand) per volume post free 75 cents."

This was not the first ad to offer back issues of the early volumes. In August 1890, Volume 1 was offered for 25 cents; in the November 1891 issue, Volumes 1 and 2 could still be supplied for 25 cents each, according to Heath.

In addition to the ANA membership, the numismatic directory list, subscribers and coin collectors receiving *The Numismatist*, ANA officers received an extra copy of each issue.

Where are all the sets of early *Numismatists* today? Complete sets of the first six volumes seldom appear at auction, but when they do, you'd better have your checkbook in hand! Two of the most famous sets in existence have changed hands in the last 10 years. First was the set once belonging to William J. Jerrems (ANA #3 and its first president), sold in the John W. Adams Sale by George F. Kolbe in June 1990. This set included Volumes 1-65 and realized an astounding bid of \$30,000!. The second set originally was owned by Andrew C. Zabriskie (interestingly, Zabriskie was not a member of the ANA) and sold in the Armand Champa Library Sale by Bowers and Merena in November 1994, where it realized \$13,200!

It is the opinion of this researcher that as many as 25 sets of the first six volumes can be traced in public offerings. They are listed in the accompanying table.

THE NUMISMATIST: THE FIRST SIX VOLUMES, WHERE ARE THEY NOW? (CONT.)

Whereabouts of The Numismatist: Sets of The First Six Volumes

Current Owner	History
1. American Numismatic Association	.Ex: George Heath, Ex: Farran Zerbe, Ex: W.W.C. Wilson
2. American Numismatic Society	By: Subscription
3. Carnegie Museum Library	Ex: George Clapp
4. Harry Bass Jr. (deceased 1998)	.Ex: W.J. Jerrems Jr. (ANA #3); Ex: A. Murl (consigned to George F. Kolbe Kimmel (ANA #4284); Ex: Perlmutter; Ex: for sale) Ray Byrne Jess Peters Sale #79 9/26/75(\$850); Ex: John W. Adams Kolbe Sale #44(Lot 202, \$30,000)
5. unknown	Ex: Ed Frossard Sale #130 (\$7.25)
6. unknown	.Ex: Hal A. Day, per ad in Feb. 1907 issue of <i>The Numismatist</i>
7. Rick Bagg	.Ex: Andrew C. Zabriskie, Ex: Farran Zerbe Henry Chapman Zabriskie Sale 6/4/1909(Lot 711, \$300); Ex: Louis Werner; Ex: Joseph Lepczyk private sale to Armand Champa; Ex: Bowers & Merena Sale 11/17/94 (Lot 280, \$13,200)
8. unknown	.Ex: Joseph Hooper (ANA #11); Ex: Ludger Gravel (ANA LM #3), per article in Jan. 1912 issue of <i>The Numismatist</i> , p. 14
9. unknown	.Ex: G.L. Tilden (ANA #959), per ad in Mar. 1912 issue of <i>The Numismatist</i> , p. 107
10. unknown	.Ex: Lyman Low Sale 4/18/17
11. unknown (lost in mail)	.Ex: B. Max Mehl; donated to ANA in 1924 & lost in mail enroute to ANA Historian Jack Ogilvie in 1950s
12. Dan Hamelberg	.Ex: Pierre Tremblay, Ex: Julius Guttag(ANA#856), per Feb. 1925 issue of <i>The</i> <i>Numismatist</i> ; Ex: Abe Kosoff's Gutttag Sale 8/6/40 (Lot 109, \$130); Ex: So. Kaplan, ...Ex: Will Neil, Ex: Mehl Sale #110 6/17/47
13. unknown	.Ex: Art Institute of Chicago per Mar. 1925 issue of <i>The Numismatist</i> , p. 149; offered for sale in Apr. 1948 issue of <i>The Numismatist</i> for \$100 by Art Institute (sale confirmed)
14. unknown	.Ex: William C. Stone (ANA #34) per Mar. 1925 issue of <i>The Numismatist</i> , p. 149

THE NUMISMATIST: THE FIRST SIX VOLUMES, WHERE ARE THEY NOW? (CONT.)

Whereabouts of The Numismatist:
Sets of The First Six Volumes

Current Owner	History
15. unknown	Ex: Elliott Smith (ANA LM#1) per Feb. 1925 issue of <i>The Numismatist</i> , p. 90
16. unknown	Ex: Robert Earl (ANA #675) per Feb. 1925 issue of <i>The Numismatist</i> , p. 90
17. unknown	Ex: Raymond L. Caldwell (ANA #1905) per ad in Apr. 1928 issue of <i>The Numismatist</i> , p. 267; Ex: Mehl Sale 12/8/1931 (Lot 912); Ex: Stack's Sale #64 2/27/43
18. unknown	Ex: R.L.Reid (ANA#155); Ex: Chas H. Fisher Sale 5/3/41 (Lot 181) prl \$135
19. unknown	Ex: William A. Philpott Jr.; Ex: B. Max Mehl Sale #107 11/23/45; Ex: John Rowe; Ex: Harry Bass Jr.
20. unknown	Ex: Paul M. Fouts (ANA #4792); Ex: Harry Bass Jr.; Ex: G.F. Kolbe Sale #75 (Lot #4) 12/12/98 prl \$10,500
21. Remy Boume	unknown
22. John J. Ford Jr.	Ex: Hiram Deats (ANA #15)
23. Eric Newman	unknown
24. John J. Pittman (deceased 1997)	Ex: John F. Jones (ANA #6)
25. unknown	Set sold in Europe more than 20 years ago

There is one great, overwhelming fact concerning *The Numismatist*. The first six volumes (in originals) are the most sought-after and coveted pieces of American numismatic literature. A library lacking these volumes just seems to fall short of greatness!

Now, as we approach the year 2000, several complete sets are poised to come up for public auction. The famous library of Harry Bass Jr. may contain as many as three complete sets of these early volumes! The library of past ANA President John J. Pittman contains the original set of John F. Jones (ANA #6). Both these libraries will come on the market in 1999 and 2000. What an opportunity for the collector!

THE NUMISMATIST: THE FIRST SIX VOLUMES, WHERE ARE THEY NOW? (CONT.)

These volumes not only tell a tale of history, but also are the birthplace of the American Numismatic Association and archive its very creation. The coin collector has the 1913 Liberty Head nickel and the 1804 silver dollar—the numismatic bibliophile has the first six volumes of *The Numismatist*. *

Sources

The Numismatist, Sept. 1888-Dec. 1893; Feb. 1907; Jan. 1912 (p. 14); Mar. 1912 (p. 107); Feb. 1925 (p. 90); Mar. 1925 (p. 149); Apr. 1928 (p. 267); Apr. 1948.

Bowers & Merena Sales, Nov. 16, 1988; Nov. 17, 1994.

Henry Chapman Sale, June 4, 1909.

Charles H. Fisher Sale, May 3, 1941.

Ed Frossard Sale #130, Dec. 20, 1894.

George F. Kolbe Sales, #44, June 1, 1990; #75, Dec. 12, 1998.

Abe Kosoff Sale, Aug. 6, 1940.

Lyman Low Sale, Apr. 18, 1917.

B. Max Mehl Sales, Dec. 8, 1931; #107, Nov. 23, 1945; #110, June 17, 1947.

Numismatic Gallery Sale, Aug. 20, 1946.

Jess Peters Sale #79, Sept. 26, 1975.

Stack's Sale #64, Feb. 27, 1943.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, and retired from the United States Air Force, David Sklow is a collector and dealer in badges and medals. He conducted mail-bid sales of numismatic literature from 1982-85 and 1991-94. and currently is a partner with Myron Xenos in the numismatic literature firm, The Money Tree in Rocky River, Ohio.

Ad Hominem Ad Nauseum: The "Great Debate" between Michael Hodder & Theodore Buttrey

by Joel J. Orosz

It was billed as the debate of the year: two honored scholars, Michael Hodder and Theodore Buttrey, meeting in an open forum to discuss the merits of Western Assay Bars (WABs). The event, unfortunately, rapidly descended to the level of personal attacks upon the reputations of some of the most respected names in American numismatics. What should have been an enlightening discussion about an under-researched area of American history instead degenerated into a spectacle that savored more of big-time wrestling than of big-time numismatics.

Who would have predicted it? Dr. Buttrey, after all, brought impeccable credentials to the debate: academic appointments at the University of Michigan and at Yale, service as the curator of the Department of Coins and Medals at the Fitzwilliam Museum, and the distinction of being the only person ever to serve a Councilor of both the Royal and the American Numismatic Societies. It came as a shock to the audience, then, when Buttrey behaved less like a Cambridge don and more like a soccer hooligan.

The proximate cause of this dismaying spectacle was Buttrey's March 16, 1996, Huntington Medal Lecture, delivered at the American Numismatic Society, later published in the *American Journal of Numismatics*, Second Series, No. 9., under the title "False Western Gold Bars." In this article, Buttrey condemned as counterfeit the vast majority of existing WABs, namely those discovered after 1950. His reasoning relied on three notions.

1. There are certain similarities between the WABs discovered after 1950 and certain Mexican gold bars he believed to be false.
2. He was aware of only a very few appearances of WABs in pre-1950 numismatic auction catalogs (for example, B. Max Mehl auctioned none prior to 1950).
3. Most of the bars discovered after 1950 came from a single

THE "GREAT DEBATE" (CONTINUED)

source (John J. Ford, then with the New Netherlands Coin Company), who had not documented information regarding their provenance.

Taking these three notions as evidence, Buttrey concluded that virtually every WAB discovered since 1950 was a fraud and that only a mere handful of bars discovered pre-1950 are the genuine article.

Buttrey had thrown down the gauntlet, and Michael Hodder, one of the most wide-ranging and well-versed students of coinage in America, took up the challenge. With research assistance from P. Scott Rubin, Hodder wrote and delivered the second annual Groves Forum Lecture at the American Numismatic Society in the spring of 1999. Reviewing Hodder's presentation in *Coin World* (May 3, 1999), Rubin and David T. Alexander noted that he had systematically refuted all of Buttrey's concerns about the authenticity of WABs discovered after 1950.

1. Buttrey's condemnation of the Mexican bars was mainly impressionistic: based upon their rough appearance, lack of a pre-1950 provenance, and being handled by John J. Ford. These impressions had not been verified by primary research or extensive examination of the bars themselves.

2. Many WABs appeared in auction catalogs dated prior to 1950, especially those issued by the Chapman brothers and by Tom Elder. Buttrey, whose main area of expertise is ancient coins, simply was not familiar with the bulk of the vast corpus of American numismatic literature: catalogs, fixed price lists, and periodicals. It was clear Buttrey simply had not searched this mass of material, and hence he missed the fact that WABs were being traded in numismatic circles from the mid-19th century on.

Much of this action took place by private sale. While he did not auction any prior to 1950, B. Max Mehl did sell a number privately, including one to John Work Garrett. Mehl also collected WABs and had a multicase exhibit of them at the American Numismatic Association annual convention in 1949, as documented in *The Numismatist*. No wonder none appeared in his auctions! WABs were made in order to transport bullion. Since their destiny was to be melted for coinage (which Hodder confirmed by studying records of the San Francisco Mint), and not for sale to collectors, there was no reason for the assayer to take

THE "GREAT DEBATE" (CONTINUED)

any special care in making them. Hence, a rough appearance is no proof of a counterfeit.

3. There is nothing nefarious—or even unusual—about John J. Ford being the primary source for the post-1950 bars. For many years, he was the only dealer who demonstrated any interest in buying them, and naturally, those who had bars to sell wound up selling them to him.

The ANA offered the use of its Numismatic Theatre during its 1999 anniversary convention so Buttrey and Hodder could meet face-to-face. Buttrey's acceptance took many knowledgeable numismatists by surprise. After all, the findings revealed in the Groves Forum Lecture had conclusively demonstrated that Buttrey's core contention—that but a small handful of authentic WABs existed before 1950—was in error. Some speculated Buttrey would use the occasion to graciously back away from his untenable position.

So the stage was set for August 11, at 9 a.m., when the two scholars met in the Numismatic Theater (Room 13 at the Rosemont Convention Center). Buttrey, who spoke first, confounded those who expected a gracious retreat by vigorously renewing the attack. He reiterated the main arguments made in his 1996 article, mentioning the Mexican bars once more and surprisingly, insisted once more that WABs were virtually unknown prior to 1950, as measured by appearances in auction catalogs. But what of the bars uncovered by Hodder's and Rubin's research? Hodder, said Buttrey, had not found a single new bar.

The audience reacted to this surprising statement with an audible murmur. Buttrey quickly said that virtually all the bars uncovered by Hodder and Rubin had been "unparted" bars that did not meet his definition of gold. He had written about gold bars in his article, and he considered gold bars to be .995 or more gold; anything less was outside the scope of his argument.

This announcement came as news to those who had read "False Western Gold Bars," for nowhere in that article did Buttrey define his scope of interest so narrowly. It was easy to see why Buttrey had indulged in such ex post facto strict constructionism, however, since it considerably narrowed the scope of the territory he had to defend.

However handy this pronouncement may have been in

THE "GREAT DEBATE" (CONTINUED)

reducing Buttrey's exposure, it led inescapably to a major absurdity. If one is to accept Buttrey's position, then a WAB that is .995 or higher is almost certainly genuine, while one that is .994 or lower is almost certainly fake. The distinction is clearly arbitrary with no empirical basis, and rather reminds one of the pointless arguments about whether certain modern proof coins should be graded MS-68 or MS-69. Undeniably, however, by retreating to .005 of his original position, Buttrey made himself a smaller target.

Even this greatly reduced position, however, was still very vulnerable, so to prevent it from being overwhelmed, Buttrey seized the offensive, with the objective of discrediting Ford and inflicting collateral damage on Norman Stack and Q. David Bowers. The following quote attributed to Buttrey are taken from the author's notes made during the debate. The words may be slightly paraphrased, but when the ANA (which banned audiotape recordings during the debate itself) releases the videotape of the talk, it will confirm that the statements quoted are faithful to the spirit of Buttrey's remarks.

Buttrey's first personal attack was directed at Ford. "We cannot take Mr. Ford's word for anything because he will say anything." Warming to the task, Buttrey stated that "... in some corners this may pass as marketing ... in law, it is called fraud." Turning his attention to one of his critics, Buttrey stated, "Stack's says I'm trying to blacken people's reputations." then added with relish, "I don't know if I've been successful, but I've tried." Scholarly dealer Q. David Bowers was not spared, for Buttrey condemned bars sold in Bowers and Ruddy's 1982 sale of the Clifford Collection as frauds.

Then, turning his invective upon his debating partner, Buttrey charged, "Hodder has cooked the evidence, but then he studied with the master." In case anyone might harbor any doubt as to the identity of "the master," Buttrey referred to Hodder as "John Ford's intimate."

When Hodder took his turn at the podium, he resisted, to his credit, what must have been a strong urge to indulge in tit-for-tat ad hominem assaults. He began by dryly noting that he was the intimate of no one excepting his wife. Hodder then shared how he and Rubin had uncovered 29 WABs from 17 different assayers,

THE "GREAT DEBATE" (CONTINUED)

all sold before 1950. Hodder explained why the vast majority of these were unparted (an acute shortage of the necessary parting acids in California at the time they were made). He also asserted that most were made for transport, with the ultimate destiny of being melted for coinage, so the assayers often did not take the time to do a quality job. Thus, Buttrey's equating of poor workmanship with counterfeit status was not defensible.

Another of Buttrey's assertions was untrue, said Hodder, namely that no scientific testing had been done on WABs. At his behest, non-destructive assays had been done at Harvard on 11 WABs. No two were alike in composition, something one would not expect if the bars were, as Buttrey had implied, the work of one or two modern counterfeiters. Finally, Hodder revealed that one of the bars Buttrey had condemned, an H. Harris \$5 bar, carried a stamp that matched exactly that of an H. Harris bar recently salvaged from the wreck of the S.S. *Central America*. As more bars from that wreck are made available, they will probably prove that other WABs castigated as fakes by Buttrey are in fact authentic.

Hodder closed his statement by noting that it strained credulity to the breaking point to imagine, as Buttrey does, that one or two modern counterfeiters would go the enormous trouble and expense of making dozens of different molds and creating hundreds of different punches to make a couple hundred counterfeit bars. It is all the more absurd since, at the time they were allegedly fabricated, the WABs were worth but a small premium over the bullion price of gold.

It was now Buttrey's turn to rebut, and he began by responding to Hodder's last point. "Whoever made the Piltdown Man didn't profit from it either, but undoubtedly derived great satisfaction from the hoax!" Then Buttrey offered a dramatic flourish. Hodder, he stated, "did not address manipulation and falsification of the evidence, and outright fraud." Buttrey then announced that he intended to turn over to the Attorney General of the State of New York all the evidence he had amassed on this matter, "for investigation of criminal fraud against John J. Ford, Stack's and Michael Hodder."

In reaction to this bombshell, Hodder, in his rebuttal, deadpanned, "Well that's a surprise." If Buttrey meant to cow Hodder

THE "GREAT DEBATE" (CONTINUED)

by this threat, he must have been surprised to find it seemed to stir his blood. Hodder used his time to cross-examine Buttrey, to devastating effect. Under Hodder's persistent questioning, Buttrey reluctantly admitted that he neither attended the Clifford sale nor examined the WABs it offered, which he had nonetheless condemned as false. When asked if he had examined the Bowie \$5 bar he called a fake, Buttrey admitted he had seen only one side of it—and through a layer of Plexiglas, at that. When Hodder asked how he could judge the merits of the piece on such slim evidence, Buttrey replied that "I didn't like its source." The source, of course, was John J. Ford. Still in full prosecutorial mode, Hodder asserted that guilt by association was a flimsy means of determining the genuineness of any numismatic piece. Hodder closed by pointing out that Buttrey had the remarkable ability to decide the authenticity of a numismatic item without examining the item itself, making him the first-ever "psychic authenticator."

There followed an opportunity for audience questions. ANA Executive Director Ed Rochette gamely tried to maintain a question-and-answer format, but several of those whose oxen had been gored by Buttrey could not contain themselves. Both Norman Stack and Q. David Bowers, for instance, took the floor to denounce the tone of Buttrey's assaults and to defend their personal honor. Fred Holabird, a consultant to the mining industry, mentioned that non-destructive assays, such as those Hodder had had conducted at Harvard, were not as reliable as invasive ones. Bob Rhue thereupon offered to underwrite invasive assays to settle the question of composition once and for all.

The last questioner, John J. Ford, reminded Buttrey that he had been a dinner guest at the Ford home nearly 30 years before and had asked Ford to supply him with photographs of WABs. Ford had complied, and Buttrey had promised to return the photos within a few weeks. Not only had Buttrey never done so, he had actually used the photos in an effort to prove that Ford had perpetrated a fraud. "Mr. Buttrey," concluded Ford, "I just want my pictures back."

"The Great Debate" unfortunately generated far more heat than light. Although a few interesting points about the WABs were discussed (such as the assay question), few were settled

THE "GREAT DEBATE" (CONTINUED)

conclusively. The quality of the two differing positions, however, acquired the clarity of crystal. Michael Hodder combined primary research at the San Francisco Mint, a thorough review of the catalog, fixed-price list and periodical literature, and an extensive firsthand examination of the WABs themselves to document his position. Theodore Buttrey did little if any primary research, conducted a very spotty review of the literature, and examined a few photographs of WABs, along with a view or two of a bar through protective Plexiglas, as "authority" for condemning hundreds of WABs as fakes. This would be bad enough if all that was at stake was the authenticity of numismatic items. When, however, the reputation—and even the physical freedom—of respected scholars and dealers is at stake, the meagerness of the documentation is inexcusable.

It seems extremely doubtful that the New York State Attorney General will take up a case supported by shards of mostly dubious evidence. Such reckless accusations, however, will harm the reputations of the targets if for no other reason than many people are uncritical in their belief of innuendo. And there is little doubt that some of the mud Buttrey hurled will miss the intended individual targets and smear the broader world of numismatics itself.

Theodore Buttrey has raised grave charges and presented supposition to prove it. If he can make those charges stick, it is incumbent upon him to produce the proof, and soon. If he cannot, he should be enough of a gentleman to apologize to those wronged by the recklessness of his accusations. Until he does one or the other, however, he may have to live with a new nickname hung upon him by one of the attendees at the Great Debate: "Tail Gunner Ted."

*

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by: John Cunnally. Princeton New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999. xi, (3), 230 pp, well illustrated in the text. Octavo, cloth with d.j. Price \$50, postpaid (Book rate U.S.A. and overseas)

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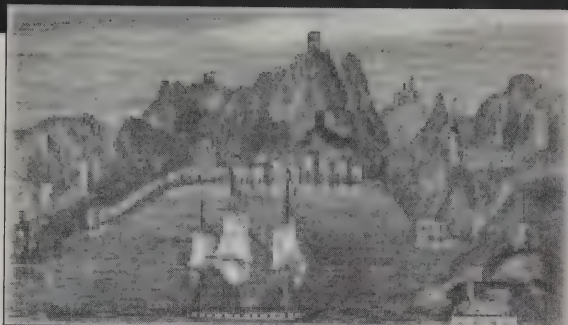
dated dollars on behalf of President Andrew Jackson, hailed from Portsmouth, scarcely 50 miles distant from our offices in Wolfeboro, New Hampshire. The very first 1804 dollar, presented by Roberts to the Sultan of Muscat, was auctioned by us in August as part of the Childs Collection. It realized \$4.14 million.

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ASYB99

Carl Herkowitz, of Detroit, Michigan, joyfully announces the realization of an “impossible” hometown American Dream—the glorious acquisition of both known Detroit 1894 ANA Convention “programmes”! Ex Armand Champa and George D. Hatie libraries, the two “survivors” of that legendary convention are now reunited here in Detroit, together again after an odyssey of 105 years! Coincidentally, George was a Detroiter and Armand was formerly of Detroit.

Heartfelt thanks to George Kolbe and David Sklow ... and the horse-drawn '94 pioneer attendees who met at the old Detroit Museum Of Art at the corner of Jefferson Avenue and Hastings Street!

Best wishes to all,
Carl

THE ASYLUM

Quarterly Journal of the
Numismatic Bibliomania Society

Volume XVII, No. 4

Winter 1999

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Of all the branches of the sport connected with book collecting, that of attending book auctions is the greatest, the most stirring. I presume some patient mathematician knows the number of facets of the Koh-i-nur diamond, but no one will ever be able to count the emotional reflections which take place during a book auction in the hearts and minds of men and women who are enamored of books. The book auction is an adventure. Other adventures may lose their glamour if you repeat them, but each experience at a sale of books brings a delightful thrill never to be duplicated.

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NUMISMATIC BIBLIOMANIA SOCIETY OFFICERS

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Editor: E. Tomlinson Fort

P.O. Box 5035
Pittsburgh, PA 15206
Etfort@aol.com

Editor-in-Chief: Bob Metzger

P.O. Box 307
Lakeville, MN 55044-0307
ultrabob@gte.net

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President's Message — by Wayne Homren

The big news in our previous issue was the transition to our new printer, Stanton Publishing. Well, with this issue our organization has successfully negotiated another major transition.

For personal reasons, Marilyn Reback was unable to continue her duties as editor. The Board and I are pleased to announce that Tom Fort has taken over the editorial reigns of *The Asylum*. Tom introduces himself below.

He brings to the role a great deal of experience in editing publications, and his knowledge and contacts in the field of classical numismatics will help to broaden the subject matter of our journal.

Although the transition led to the late arrival of the current

issue, Tom, myself, and the entire NBS Board have committed to completing the new year with the full complement of four issues for the year 2000 volume.

We have a number of very fine articles in the pipeline for the coming year, and are certain our members will be pleased with the results.

Meanwhile, *The Asylum's* electronic companion, The E-Sylum, has continued uninterrupted on a regular weekly basis. The subscriber list has climbed to about 275 individuals worldwide. It's a great way for bibliophiles to keep in touch and comment on current issues of interest to our specialty.

Please send subscription requests to me at whomren@coinlibrary.com

Editorial: Who Am I? Why Am I Here?

by E. Tomlinson Fort

First, let me apologize for the lateness of this issue. Most of you expected the Winter 1999 issue in October and it is February 2000 when it finally lands upon your doorstep. The reasons for this are too long for me to go into here, but let me say that it is my hope, and that of the NBS board, that future issues will be arriving on a more regular basis.

Not wishing to be rude, I

should introduce myself and make a bit of a confession: I have only a minimum knowledge of American numismatics and American numismatic books. This is not to say I am unfamiliar with the numismatic world. I hold degrees in ancient and medieval history from both Penn State and the University of St. Andrews (Scotland), I have taught these subjects at both of these institutions, as well as at

La Roche College in Pittsburgh.

As a post-graduate student at St. Andrews I was fortunate to work under Prof. Donald Bullough and Dr. Veronica Smart and much of my studies dealt with Anglo-Saxon diplomatics and monetary history. I have published numismatic articles, and the occasional review, in *Spink's Numismatic Circular*, *The Classical Numismatic Review*, *The Celator*, and *The Clarion*. I was the editor of *The Proceedings of the Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society* which were published in 1994. In addition to my membership to the NBS, I am a member of the British Numismatic Society, the Royal Numismatic Society, the Medieval Academy of America, the Societe francaise de numismatique and the American Numismatic Society.

I have an extensive library of books (15 bookcases and growing). However, it consists almost exclusively of ancient and medieval history and coinage. In short, I do have experience with numismatics, numismatic literature and book collecting. Though I also have limitations – the obvious one being that while I have been involved in numismatic research for almost two decades I only heard about Sylvester Crosby and Henry

Chapman within the past few years.* To me, they were as obscure as the Vicomte Ponton d'Amecourt and Nicholas Orsme are to many of you.

Since my personal areas of interest are on the other side of the Atlantic, and deal with periods long before Europeans set up permanent settlements on this side, it is my hope during my tenure as editor to slowly broaden the scope of this journal a bit. However, those whose passion is for American literature please do not worry, I have no intention in making this organization into the *Société pour l'étude de littérature numismatique*.

I am new to this position, consequently I will make mistakes. Thus, I welcome all suggestions and comments. Please feel free to contact me via either the postal service or e-mail. On occasion I also have a table at coin shows in the Cleveland and Pittsburgh area. Feel free to stop over and talk any time. I won't even make you buy anything.

Finally, even more important than your comments, are submission(s) to this journal. Without these this publication cannot survive. It is my hope that during my tenure this journal will continue to grow and expand as it has in previous years.

*The joke in Pittsburgh is that while Wayne Homren and I have two of the largest numismatic libraries in western Pennsylvania, and for several years we lived within three blocks of each other, there are virtually no duplications between our collections.

Letters to the Editor

Danish Colonies in America

Daniel Groux wasn't as far out as Joel Orosz thinks. [See "The Printer's Devil: Daniel Groux's 'Descriptive Catalogue' for the Maryland Historical Society and the Coins of Joel Barlow," *The Asylum* 13/3 (1999), p. 6.] There are real coins of the Danish colony in America! They are not common and they are mostly ignored by collectors of Early American coins. These coins were made for the Danish West Indies. You will know the place today as the United States Virgin Islands.

The Danish West Indies coins have the legend DANSKE AMERICANSK, or some similar abbreviation. They were made from 1740 to 1767, in copper

and silver. The copper one skilling pieces of 1740 (only) are rare. Silver pieces made from 1740 to 1767 are more common, and come in 12 and 24 skilling denominations.

Ken Bressett

Woodward Writing Samples Sought

I am conducting research regarding W.E. Woodward and would like to examine samples of his handwriting for comparison purposes.

I hope to attribute a catalog in my library to him personally. NBS members may contact me at the following address.

John Murison, 6 Club Rd.
Baltimore, Md. 21210

Email: jamstock@yahoo.com.

New Members

Tony Anastas, Wenham, MA
Jim Bussman, Long Valley, NJ
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Some Numismatic Web Sites listed in the E-Sylum:

The Coins of Colonial and Early America, a project of the Robert H. Gore Jr. Numismatic Endowment, University of Notre Dame, Department of Special Collections.

<http://www.nd.edu/~rarebook/coins/ColCoin/index.html>

The Bank of Canada's web site. Available in both English and French, it contains an online museum of Canadian numismatics.

<http://www.bank-banque-canada.ca>

Eben Locke Mason, Jr. – A Double Life

by D.R.R. Pepper

To begin with, I do not mean Mason was deliberately deceiving people. Rather, that most of his numismatic associates did not seem to know much about his personal life and that most of his non-numismatic associates did not seem to know that he bought, sold and collected coins. Why this was I cannot say, but it seems to have been the case. Most of what follows will therefore concern Mason's "other" life, the one apart from his numismatic interests.

As recently as the early 1990s, when I first saw his name in print, I had no idea that Eben Locke Mason was a numismatist. I am not one myself. I became interested in Mason for reasons that had nothing to do with numismatics. His conspicuous involvement in that area was revealed to me by a single entry in the gargantuan *National Union Catalog*, or NUC.

At the time I wanted to learn more about Mason because I was particularly interested in a good friend of his, Edward Zane Carroll Judson (more about him in a moment). I went to the most accessible set of the NUC, in the Hoover Institution on the campus of Stanford University, hoping that Mason published at least one book. Turned out he had, and the one listed by the NUC

was a pamphlet entitled *Rare American Coins* (Boston, 1887). The only copy known to the catalog was in the Library of Congress. That institution was kind enough to photocopy and send the entire text to me.

Rare American Coins is the only publication by Mason I have seen to date. I am, however, aware that he wrote extensively on numismatic matters. I hope the facts I have turned up, along with autobiographical nuggets in Mason's own publications, can eventually be combined to produce a proper "Life" of this interesting man.

In the meantime, we return to that friend I mentioned – Edward Zane Carroll Judson, a flamboyant author/adventurer, better known by his most famous pen-name, Ned Buntline. Sometimes called "King of the Dime Novelists," Buntline was born in the early 1820s (the exact year is uncertain). He probably met Mason during the 1850s, in connection with one of his pet projects.

It is said that Mason was associate editor of *Ned Buntline's Own*, a journal Ned published from time to time, from the 1840s to the 1860s. I have not seen a single issue; so for information on the journal I relied almost entirely on what has been

said by Ned's biographer Jay Monaghan. He published in 1951a comprehensive life of Ned, called (significantly) *The Great Rascal*.

Monaghan has nothing at all to say about Mason. The reason, I suspect, is that Monaghan was unable to find any information on the man. However, Monaghan was certainly aware of Mason's connection with Buntline. Mason is quoted, at length and quite respectfully, by Ned's first biographer Frederick E. Pond. He knew Ned, and apparently Mason as well, in the 1870s and early 1880s.

Under the pen-name "Will Wildwood," Pond edited a pioneering outdoorsman's journal *Wildwood's Magazine*, to which Ned occasionally contributed.

After Buntline's death in July 1886, Pond decided to write a life of his friend. During the next year or so, he gathered as much information as he could and published it serially in *Wildwood's* over a period of ninth months – from May 1888 to January 1889. A fair amount of this narrative Pond dished up "raw," in the form of long quotations from a number of informants. And one of these sources was Mason, described by Pond as one "of Ned's most intimate acquaintances" and "associate editor of *Ned Buntline's Own*."

Mason's contribution was largely a disquisition on Ned's nomadic life and careless habits.

According to Mason whenever the novelist packed up and left one of his many abodes he scattered to the four winds nearly all his personal property and sallied forth with little more than the clothes on his back. Since the objects of this carelessness included manuscripts, letters and every other kind of written record, when Ned died there were not many documents left for a biographer.

Mason, as it turns out, was well acquainted not only with Ned but also with his last wife, Anna Fuller. She was a native of Stamford, in Delaware County N.Y., where Ned had been born. But, Ned had left that area as a small child, returning to it only when he was around 50 years old. Having abandoned his previous wife and their four children, Ned married Anna Fuller and settled down permanently in Stamford in 1871. When he died there 15 years later, his widow was left with their son, a boy named for his father, and the memory of a daughter, who had died at the age of four.

Mason must have paid more than one visit to "Eagle's Nest," the commodious Stamford house where Squire Edward Judson and his small family lived. On July 9, 1888 E. Locke Mason was married – at Stamford – to Ned's widow, Mrs. Anna Fuller Judson. I learned this from an excellent biographical sketch of Buntline by Albert Johannsen, a historian of dime novels.

Coincidentally the marriage took place the same month in which Pond published Mason's reminiscences of Ned.

I had known about the marriage for some years when I was first becoming interested in Ned Buntline. A woman in California, one of Ned's many romantic interests, had preserved a newspaper clipping about the wedding of Mason and Anna Judson. A photocopy was sent to me by her grandson, whom I had visited at his home in the San Francisco Bay area.

Records of the town clerk in South Kortright, N.Y. (a township adjacent to Stamford), give vital statistics from bride and groom. Anna, age 38, was the daughter of J.W. Fuller and Sarah Buell Fuller, both of Stamford. The groom, Eben Locke Mason, age 52, was a coin dealer in Boston and this was his third marriage. He had been born in Portland, Me., the son of Eben Locke Mason (Sr.) and Mary Scott Cobbe Mason. His precise birth date, which I've been unable to determine, would have been either in the latter months of 1835 or the early months of 1836.

In 1971 a man named Malcolm MacPherson published a booklet titled *E.Z.C. Judson, Alias Ned Buntline*, of which there is a copy in the Stamford (N.Y.) Public Library. It's a type-written text, consisting of title-page plus 24 pages of biography and eight pages of illustrations. It

was probably produced by the author. In the text, MacPherson states that he was born in Stamford *circa* 1900 and grew up hearing many stories about Ned, "most of which were fantastically inaccurate."

The young MacPherson befriended Clifford Champion, whose father had known Ned well in the 1870s and 1880s. The elder Champion had compiled a scrapbook about Buntline which MacPherson acquired in 1937 when Clifford Champion died. MacPherson described it as "the source of most of my knowledge [about Ned]."

On the final pages of MacPherson's text, he gives the following information about E. Locke Mason:

1. Soon after Ned's death, Mason inserted an advertisement in the *Mirror*, asking for mementos of the late Col. Judson, to be used in a biography projected by Mason himself. He identifies himself only as a "publisher" and gives Box 2436 as his address.

2. Another clipping from the *Mirror*, dated July 31, 1888, deserves to be quoted at length:

Capt. E. Locke Mason, of Boston, it seems was an old chum of the late Col. Judson, served with him in the late Civil War, and was associated with him in the publication of Ned's famous newspaper "Ned Buntline's Own," besides being an active member of the unfortunate "Lone Star" orga-

nization of Cuba and General Lopez notoriety. Was associated with Buntline in various American [patriotic] orders with which he was connected, and manager of various dramatic temples in Philadelphia and elsewhere during Ned's tour of the United States [in 1872 and 1873] ...

Since the Col.'s decease Mason has been attending to the business matters connected with "Eagle's Nest," and is now writing the Colonel's biography.

The tour referred to was of a play, *The Scouts of the Prairie*, written by Ned and starring himself, along with Buffalo Bill Cody and others. I've accumulated a good deal of previously unknown information about this tour, but it does not include any mention of Mason.

3. MacPherson speculates that the unnamed source of the information in that clipping was Mason himself, and that some of it – he does not elaborate – was "far from correct." MacPherson adds:

Clifford Champion told me that Mason did complete Ned's biography, but it was never published, possibly because Pond had already completed and published his.

4. In July 1888 "Champ" was surprised to receive a postcard from the Rev. F.B. Murch of South Kortright, announcing that he had officiated at the wedding

of "Mrs. Anna F. Judson ... & Mr. Eben L. Mason." MacPherson adds:

Clifford Champion told me some years later [*circa*1928] that Mason thought that Mrs. Judson had money; also that she though Mason had money. They went to Europe on their honeymoon and found that between them they had barely enough money for the return trip.

5. MacPherson notes that Ned's son Eddie died "on August 11, 1894, at the age of thirteen." The scrapbook apparently contained no information on Mason's death, but it did reveal that Anna and Mason had at least one child of their own – a son, who grew to maturity. An obituary preserved by the American Numismatic Society puts Mason's death in September 1901, when he was in his mid-60s and Anna in her early 50s. They were then living in Philadelphia.

Anna Fuller Judson Mason died on January 15, 1917. Her and Mason's son survived her. Since he was born no later than the mid-1890s he may have left descendants.

That is very nearly the full extent of my present knowledge of Mason's life, aside from his flourishing career as a numismatist. I hesitate to venture into that minefield, for three reasons: First, I know next to nothing about numismatics. Secondly, I

have read, as already noted above, only one of Mason's numismatic publications. Finally, I strongly suspect that Eben Locke Mason Jr. has occasionally be confused with a Philadelphia numismatist named Edward Mason Jr.

For an authoritative discussion of E. Locke Mason's numismatic career I refer readers to John W. Adams' biographical sketch, "Ebenezer Locke Mason," in volume one of *United States Numismatic Literature* (George Kolbe, 1982).

Pending clarification of the questions I have raised, I urge those readers who have copies of E. Locke Mason's publications to look them over for information

about his non-numismatic activities. For example, on page 22 of *Rare American Coins*, Mason reveals that he was in London during the summer of 1886. This means that he would have missed Ned Buntline's funeral. It was a grand affair, and if Mason had been there he would surely have contributed a eulogy to some newspaper or magazine.

One final point, Mr. Adams calls him Ebenezar Locke Mason and that does seem to have been the baptismal first name of father and son. I am no authority on the subject, but it looks to me as if many 19th-century Ebenezers shortened that biblical name to Eben, as being less rustic and more "modern."

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The Printer's Devil: The Tenth Annual "Shammies" Awards

by Joel J. Orosz

The Academy of Wretched Excess in Numismatic Advertising is pleased to present the tenth annual edition of the "Shammies," those coveted awards which honor excellence in the employment of hyperbole to increase sales. The coin market has been red-hot over the past year, and the ad copy has consequently become passionately purple. Once more, your columnist is the sole judge of these awards, which will consist, as in years past, of two sections: Bloviations by the Blowhards, and Bloopers by the More Bashful. Let us begin with the Bloviations.

The "Hideousness in Description" award goes to perennial honoree David Hall, for headlining an offering "Monstrous 1882 21/2 Liberty." Judge's note: Our handy dictionary defines "monstrous" as follows: 1. Frightful or hideous; esp. in appearance. 2. Shocking or revolting; outrageous." If Mr. Hall is to be taken literally, apparently PCGS MS-67s ain't what they used to be!

Coin World (CW), 7-12-99, p. 25.

The "Dan Quayle's Potatoe" award goes to Valley View Coins, for peddling a "Unification of

Germany" coin set, which includes a piece of barbed wire, which, they note, "divided the German" [sic], and also a piece of concrete labeled "Relict [sic] of the Berlin Wall."

Valley View Coins, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1999, p. 1.

The "You Can Profit from the End of Civilization" award goes to the Y2K Silver Company for shilling the "OBU" or "Official Barter Unit" Silver Round. Judge's comment: One might ask what duly constituted body sanctions millennial panic-mongering. One might also ask why, given the imminent collapse of all computer systems, the Y2K Silver Company bothered to secure a web site at www.y2ksilvercompany.com?

CW, 3-29-99, p.63.

The "Continuing Abuse of the Word 'Unique'" award goes to American Express, in collaboration with the "American Historic Society," for offering "Unique Pennies of the 19th Century:" an 1857 Flying Eagle, 1822 Large Cent, and 1863 Indian Cent. Judge's note: This glossy come-on contains other numismatic "treasures" as well, such as a lamp made of Lincoln Cents.

American Express, Winter 1999 Mailing

The "You Will Love Our Fee-free Fees" award goes to Independent Coin Grading Company for the following pitch: "ICG's 'no grade, no fee' policy. We charge only a five-dollar processing fee if we 'no grade' a coin."

CW, 2-8-99, Front Wrapper Ad

The "Thank Heavens it's not Cast" award goes to veteran Shammies honoree Jay Parrino, who describes a 1914 MS-65 Indian Head Half Eagle as "original, fresh and struck!"

Numismatic News (NN), 11-17-98, p. 25.

The "What Becomes a Legend Least" award goes to Kagin's and Jay Parrino's The Mint, for excessive and unnecessary puffing about the McCoy-Brand-Yale University Brasher Doubloon. Judge's note: The description is larded with debatable statements, such as "This specimen boasts THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS AND IMPORTANT PEDIGREE in American numismatics," and at least two statements that are dead wrong: "The Brasher Doubloon was THE FIRST GOLD COIN REGULARLY STRUCK FOR CIRCULATION IN THE UNITED STATES!" (Breen calls them patterns.) Another misstatement: "Edward Cogan (America's first coin dealer)." Cogan was not even the first coin dealer in Philadelphia (both William Idler and John W. Kline

beat him to the punch in the Quaker City).

CW, 3-2-98, p. 67.

The It's the Very Best – Except for the Better Ones" award goes to double winner Jay Parrino for peddling an MS-64 1921 Double Eagle with the following headline: "When you're ready for the best, the very best." Judge's note: The fine print contains the following information about this "very best" coin: "This beautiful specimen is certainly among the finest surviving examples, Akers noting that 'only a very few exist which could reasonably be graded MS-64 or better.'"

NN, 1-20-98, p. 13.

The "Not So Immaculate Conception" award goes to double winner David Hall, for his highly innovative use of the word "immaculate" in describing an 1834 Classic Head Five-Dollar Gold Piece: "The surfaces are immaculate, just a few microscopic scuffs away from an even higher grade." Judge's note: Just imagine what Mr. Hall's standard of definition would do to the doctrine of immaculate conception!

CW, 5-25-98, p. 45.

The "Kurt Krueger Memorial Understatement in Cataloging" award goes to triple winner Jay Parrino, for gushing about the Jack Lee 1886-O Silver Dollar: "The almost incomprehensible quality and rarity of the specimen offered here is so extreme

that it nearly defies belief."

CW, 5-25-98, p. 54.

The "Do You Suppose this is *Really* Their Fourth Best Reason?" award goes to Kingswood Coin Auctions, for listing as number four of their "top ten reasons why the Kingswood VI coin auction sale is for you" as follows: "Every coin is described with the lot number, date, grade, denomination, and minimum bid." Judge's note: Don't you just hate those other coin auction catalogs that don't give the lot number, date, grade, and denomination of the coin being sold?

CW, 5-25-98, p. 63.

The "Unimprovable – Unless a Fully Struck Example Comes Along" award goes to quadruple winner Jay Parrino, for calling an 1895-O Silver Dollar "simply unimprovable," after having first noted its "tiniest marks" and its being "not quite fully struck."

NN, 6-23-98, p. 13.

The "Spectacularly Bad Timing" award goes to The Coin Depot, for making the following bold statement: "Just as the buffalo vanished from the Great Plains, the Buffalo Nickel is rapidly disappearing." Judge's note: On page three of the same newspaper, it was announced that the Littleton Coin Company had acquired—and would soon be selling—a hoard of 300,000 Buffalo Nickels!

CW, 4-20-98, p. 13.

The "Perfection Ain't What it Used to be" award goes to triple winner David Hall for his description of a 1934 MS-66 Peace Dollar: "A monster gem. The surfaces are so clean the word 'perfect' comes readily to mind. You really have to look close to find a few microscopic marks." Judge's note: If an MS-66 with marks brings to mind the word "perfect," does an MS-67 with fewer marks bring to mind the word "perfecter?"

CW, 7-6-98, p. 64.

The "Creative Writing and Even More Creative Math" award goes to Sovereign Entities Grading Service, which offers a "free gift" worth \$35, and a "free subscription" to a numismatic publication, for a mere \$60 annual dues payment. The company also clearly states its policy, transcribed here exactly as it appeared in the ad: "Wedonotbaseourpricingstructureofeesc hargedonthevalueofa coin(s)." Judge's comment: Thanks for clearing that up for us!

NN, 5-19-98, p. 15.

The "Not-As-Daring-As-You-Might-Think" award goes to quadruple winner David Hall for offering "\$110 Worth of PCGS Graded Coins Free as part of a daring market offer" Judge's note: The offer becomes considerably less daring when one discovers that one must pay \$97 for a subscription to Mr. Hall's *Inside*

View newsletter in order to get the \$110 worth of "free" coins.

CW, 10-4-99, p.5 9.

The "What, Leftovers Again?" award goes to the National Collector's Mint, Inc., for peddling the "first U.S. legal tender silver certificate design in real silver!" Judge's note: Puzzled because you cannot remember the Bureau of Engraving and Printing issuing an "authentic legal tender silver certificate ... in .999 pure silver?" Don't be. This is an actual silver certificate encased in .999 silver foil.

CW, 10-4-99, p. 87.

The "English as She is Spoke" award goes to quintuple winner Jay Parrino, for these two gems, both culled from the same ad. Describing an 1877 Indian Cent (PR-66, Red), Parrino says, "This gem proof has virtually no toning at all, although what does exist is a vivid and attractive magenta color." That, however, is a masterpiece of clarity compared to this sentence, quoted in its entirety, from his description of a 1796 Draped Bust Small Eagle Dime: "Viewed today, such historic memento from America's rugged youth."

NN, 7-7-98, p. 19.

The "Notate the New Word" award goes to Delaware Valley Rare Coin Company for their use of the phrase "notated on the insert." Judge's comment: Thanks to NBS member Ken Barr for noticing this one. Ken

adds, "I votate for this as the best new numiword of 1999."

CW, 2-22-99, p. 104.

The 'Even Better Than Our Superb Proof VG-8's" award goes to double winner Coin Depot for offering "Superb Proof Washington Silver Quarter Rolls, extremely fine to about uncirculated." Judge's note: Thanks again to Ken Barr for spotting this one.

CW, 3-1-99, p. 103.

The "As Long As You Literally Pay Us \$29 First" award goes to *Coin Connoisseur* magazine for headlining their ad, "We'll practically pay you to receive *Coin Connoisseur* magazine," after which they say, in agate print, that they want \$29 for one year's subscription.

CW, 7-13-99, p. 43.

The "Check Them Figgers Agin" award goes to past winner David Vogel, who hawks his book *The 27 Most Closely Guarded Secrets of the Rare Coin Industry*, for \$19.95. Quoting Mr. Vogel: "Since I now charge \$1,000 per hour as a consultant, I initially planned on selling the book for \$295, figuring all my training material would make or save the average numismatic consumer ten to one hundred times that figure. However, quite honestly, I am looking for back-end business." Judge's comment: Why would a guy making more than \$2,000,000 per year as a consultant be looking for

\$19.95 in backend business?

CW, 6-29-98, p.20.

The "I Never Knew John J. Pittman Had A Brother" award goes to Monaco Financial, for offering an 1892 Five-Dollar Liberty previously, they say, "from the collection of the famed collector James J. Pittman."

CW, 6-29-98, p. 46.

The "Proofreader's Day Off" award goes to sextuple winner Jay Parrino for his undated price list, received as a supplement to the August 9, 1998 edition of *Numismatic News*. Among the choice bits within, are the following: (1) "Unlike many dealers who shutter [sic] when a client calls them to sell back the coins they purchased ... (p. 1)." (2) Vending the "finest known 1793 Chain Cent," Parrino asserts that it is the plate coin in "Walter Breem's [sic] *Complete Encyclopedia of U.S. Coins*" (p. 2). (3) Peddling "the finest known 1793 Wreath Cent": "The pedigree is too long to include here, but its next owner will be in distinguished company indeed" (p. 2). (4) Offering the "Absolutely Unique" (as opposed to the "partially unique") 1870-S Seated Half Dime: "There is nothing more rare than something which is unique—Period, end of subject." Not quite, as he proceeds to expound on the subject for four more sentences (p. 8).

Jay Parrino Insert to *NN*, 8-9-98.

The "As Opposed to Uniquely Common Coins?" award goes to Sam Lukes, for offering "uniquely rare coins."

CW, 9-7-98, p. 44.

The "Last Word In Good Taste" award goes to Fisher Research Laboratory, for running the headline, "What does a 1957 Pontiac hubcap have in common with a 2000-year-old coin and Jimmy Hoffa's body?"

CW, 9-7-98, p. 72.

The 'No Wonder His Network Of Buyers Is So Exclusive' award goes to double winner David Vogel, who assures people with coins to sell, "We can get you more for your coins by obtaining competitive bids from an exclusive network of buyers." Mr. Vogel goes on to say, "We work on commissions, so the more money we get for your estate, collection, or single coin, the more money we make. It is in our mutual best interest to get you as much as possible for your coins."

NN, 9-1-98, p. 37.

The "David Hall Memorial Adjectival Overkill" award goes to Legend Numismatics, which has this to say about an MS-68 Elgin Commemorative: "Both sides have a monster heart pounding bright iridescent tab toning." Judge's comment: Do you suppose that "tab toning" means it was dipped in soda pop?

CW, 10-19-98, p. 73.

The "History Is Bunk" award goes to quintuple winner David Hall for this eyebrow-raising statement about a 1793 Chain Cent: "In addition, Ms. Liberty's flowing hair was considered too sexy for the times."

CW, 8-24-98, p. 52.

The "Unique - Except for 19,999 Others" award goes to Gatewest Coin Ltd., for offering "Canada's 1998 unique proof," of which, they admit later, 20,000 were minted.

CW, 2-8-99, p. 73.

The "We'll Pay More For Coins We Can't Sell" award goes to Pinnacle Rarities, for offering "ten very good reasons to sell to Pinnacle." Reasons 1 and 3 follow, verbatim. (1) "We sell directly to collectors, so we can pay more than wholesalers." (3) "We will buy everything from your collection, not just the coins we need for our clients."

CW, 2-8-99, p.125.

This year, three remarkable performances elicit special Shammies. The "Incredible Chutzpah" award goes to Bret Bogus, of Eagle Numismatics. On June 22, 1998, the *Tonight Show with Jay Leno* ran a regular feature poking fun at ridiculous advertisements. One of the ads thus skewered had been placed by Eagle Numismatics. Jay Leno displayed it on camera, and chortled at the pun occasioned by Mr. Bogus' last name. Mr. Bogus promptly added a tag

line to his advertisements reading, "As seen on the Tonight Show 6/22/98" (see *NN* 8-4-98, p. 56). On the evening of September 8, 1998, Leno ran another ridiculous advertisement segment, and featured this Eagle Numismatics ad, laughing at the fact that, on June 22, he had been making fun of Mr. Bogus, and had not intended to promote his business. Shortly thereafter, a new tag line appeared on Eagle ads, "As seen on the Tonight Show, 6/22 & 9/8/98" (see *NN*, 10-13-98). It is worth noting that this ad offers approximately 1,000 coins with two provisos. The first says, "Prices are not shown to allow for more coin listings." The second says, "Regular prices are three percent higher." Judge's comment: Three percent higher than what? Perhaps the answer will be seen on the *Tonight Show*!

The "We Don't Read Our Own Catalogs" award goes to Heritage Numismatic Auctions, Inc., for their FUN sale, January 6-8, 1999. Some of their choice comments deserve to be immortalized. Lot 5029, a DMPL 1879-O Morgan Dollar: "To obtain this date in DMPL is nearly impossible." Unless, of course, you remember lot 5028, which is an 1879-O Morgan DMPL. Lot 5086, an 1884-S Morgan in MS-62: "Just try and find one that is really ... new." To do so, just turn the page, where lots 5087-5089 are all mint-state 1884-S

Morgans. Lot 6276, a 1922 No D Lincoln Cent in MS-63: "This is only the second or third mint-state coin we can remember having handled in the past fifteen years." Or at least the past 15 seconds, for lot 6276 is a 1922 No D Lincoln Cent in MS-62. Nor can we overlook the verbal gymnastics. Lot 5439: "Basically sharp except for occasional mushiness." Lot 5482, headlined as a "pleasing and problem-free 1794 dollar," that has, according to the detailed description, a shallow scratch on the obverse, a planchet void in the date, and a rim nick on the reverse. Problem-free, indeed! Finally, two outright errors. Lot 5700, offering an 1828 Half Eagle, says, "As with all known examples, hair curls around Liberty's face and the feathers on the eagle's right wing are weakly struck." Lot 904 in Auction 88 was a fully-struck proof-like 1828 Half Eagle. Lot 5762, an 1861-S Pacquet Double Eagle, is described thus: "This very challenging issue was not discovered and distinguished as a separate variety until the 1930s." Actually, lot 1317 of New York Stamp & Coins 1890 sale of the Parmelee collection is identified in the catalog as "Pacquet's designs."

Thanks to NBS member Karl Moulton for finding these award winners.

The "Most Linguistically Creative Catalog Of The Year"

award goes to Superior Stamp & Coin, for their February 8-10, 1999 auction. The inspired inventions are many. Lot 396: "A few freckles in the right reverse field but nothing in the way of dreaded spots." Lot 552: "The surfaces are alive with luster, with the fields dancing with mint imparted vibrancy." Lot 595: "This has a pure-blood provenance" (apparently, murders were involved). Lot 737: "Utterly gorgeous pristine white luster that is toned only at the rims" (pristine luster that is toned is much like a virgin who is experienced). Lot 1041: "Scintillating and bright, and glows with a silvery fire only rarely found in a Seated Half Dollar coin. Moreover the surface – whose bloom seems to dance in delight in its mint-fresh glory – the surface is nicely toned in shades that include lavender and blue (obverse) turning to deep sunset orange-reds and golds with some blue (reverse)." (Apparently, this coin represents the first case of mint-applied toning!) Lot 1310: "The luster proclaims its snowy whiteness with loud blaring horns and clash of symbols [sic]." (Could this be only a symbolic statement?) Lot 1348, an 1893-S Morgan graded MS-65: "This date is virtually unknown in true gem condition ... only seven have been so graded, with a single coin graded higher." (Apparently, these eight must have been graded before

they became "known.") Lot 3277: "Abounding in rare qualities!" (just as the catalog is abounding in meaningless adjectives)! Lot 3514: "Struck using an 'all brilliant' finish ..." (and we had always thought they were struck using a coin press). This catalog also abounded in blunders. Lot 691: "Twenty-Cent coins were struck only in 1875-8 before the Mint abolished the denomination." (The Mint does not abolish denominations; Congress does.) Lot 692: "This is the last issued Twenty-Cent piece after a brief four-year run. The shortest for a regular production denomination in the entire series of American numismatics." (Susan B. Anthony Dollars were produced for three years, 1979-81, and resumed briefly in 1999.) Lot 1795: "King Farouk was an avid collector. In his time, which spanned the 1930s to 1954, when he died ..." (he was exiled in 1954; he died in 1965).

Thanks to Karl Moulton for this remarkable set of blunders.

And now, some amusing bloopers to close out our lengthy offering.

The "Most Ambiguously Titillating Headline of the Year" award goes to Coin World, for "Bimetallic Members Ponder Meeting." Judge's comment: Does this mean that the members of the club are bimetallic in composition? Or does it mean

that the members' members are bimetallic? If the latter, Viagra is sure to become obsolete!

CW, 10-19-98, p. 8.

The "Keep Your Sweaty Palms Off My Coins, Buster!" award goes to John Meeks, a grader for NGC, for the following testimony: "As close as I've come to having sweaty palms was when we graded the Eliasberg and ANA (Beebe) 1913 Nickels and the two ANA 1804 Dollars ... Holding them and getting a long close look was a great experience."

CW, 5-18-98, p. 65.

The "Something Got Lost in the Translation" award goes to the book edited by Osmund Bopearachchi and D.P.M. Weerakhody, entitled *Evolution and Circulation of Foreign Coins in the Indian Ocean*. Judge's comment: Actually, foreign coins do more sinking than circulating in the Indian Ocean.

Biblionumis-Listserve communication, 7-31-98.

The "Come Again About That Name?" award goes to the Royal Canadian Mint for touring its massive 125-ounce gold nugget to local television stations. The nugget, named (your judge is not making this up) "Climax," made an appearance on the KTLA morning news show in Los Angeles where Donn Pearlman explained that "Climax" was found in 1907 at

Rainbow Creek in Australia, when the location of the find was being excavated for a brothel. Judge's comment: This was a lucky discovery. Collectors should not expect to routinely find Climax every time they visit a brothel!

CW, 6-29-98, p.72.

The "Most Shocking Headline Of The Year" award goes to Ira and Larry Goldberg, for headlining their ad, "Take advantage of us." Judge's comment: One can

only hope that the membership of "Women in Numismatics" did not take this invitation literally!

NN, 10-13-98, p. 21.

This ends the tenth edition of the annual "Shammies" awards. Experience teaches us that the hype never stops, and there will be much more to report upon next year. Until then, gentle readers, here's to accurate descriptions and straightforward prose!

Book Review

by Larry Dziubek

Communion Tokens of the World

by Lester M. Burzinski

The author made many trips to Scotland, the seat of knowledge and the home of the majority of communion token issuances. Every trip added information and tokens for his collection; and this was the basis for his tome on the subject. His book is certainly a handsome and sturdy volume. There are 7730 communion token varieties listed, and there are 4620 photos within the 579 pages.

The best features of this book are:

1. The most comprehensive listing ever assembled.
2. Each token has a complete description of each side.
3. There is a glossary of

tokens issued in various countries and cities.

4. The photos are quite good considering the subject matter.

5. Listings include the attributions of previous catalogues.

Some will consider it an oversight that there is no rarity or value guide, but serious collectors know that this is nearly impossible. You will also have to re-list new numbers on all the tokens in your collection. However, you should be able to identify any of those that have previously eluded you. The price of the book is \$80.00, postpaid.

You can send your orders directly to:

Lester Burzinski
2105 Oakridge Avenue
Madison, WI 53704

News From the Net

by Pete Smith

The E-Sylum is an electronic publication of the Numismatic Bibliomania Society. To receive these reports, send your e-mail address to Wayne Homren at whomren@coinlibrary.com. Following is a distillation of items included between July 4 and December 26, 1999.

Literature Tragedy Averted

The October 10, 1999, issue of The E-Sylum reported that California currency dealer Arri Jacob was selling vignettes from a Bureau of Engraving and Printing presentation book from the 1860's to 1870's. The report suggested that the known population of such books had now dropped below 50. The issue for the following week included additional information from Ken Barr. He reported that the volume was thoroughly disbound when Jacob acquired it.

Research Requests

Daryl Atchinson asked for a copy of a Paramount sale from 1975.

Dave Bowers is looking for "contemporary advertisements, newspaper notices, paper material, trial strikings, dies etc. relating to the origin and history of Civil War Tokens." Bowers can be reached through chris@bowersandmerena.com.

David Cassell asked for comparison samples of handwriting

of Jacob Eckfeldt and William E. DuBois. He wanted to confirm the sources of documents related to Postage Currency Coins. Joel Orosz offered photocopies of book inscriptions by both authors. Pete Smith mentioned an Eckfeldt document illustrated in Craig Whitford's catalog of October 6, 1995. Later Cassell responded with thanks to Orosz for helping confirm his sources.

David J. Davis asked for help on listings of the 1802 half dime in Steigerwalt's Fixed Price Lists. Joel Orosz also forwarded information to Davis on 1802 half dimes handled by Ebenezer Locke Mason.

Bill Fivaz asked if anyone was working on an update to the Hibler and Kappen reference on so-called dollars. "It's in very bad need of updating, and I think someone who is qualified could do the hobby a great service by undertaking such a venture."

George Kolbe responded, "How times do change. I recall in the late 1970s being offered 1,000 - yes one thousand - copies of Hibler & Kappen @ \$1.00 per copy and passing on the deal. These books were a drug on the market, dogs! Anyone acquainted with the numismatic literature marketplace knows the phenomenon well: when a book is in print or widely available you can't sell it;

when it is out of print you can't buy it."

Lawrence J. Lee who is with the Durham Western Heritage Museum, home to the Byron Reed collection, asked for help matching Reed's coins with auction sales.

Bob Murphy asked for a source of information on Director of the Mint Horatio Burchard. Pete Smith responded with a brief biography.

Bill Murray asked for a copy of prices realized from Chapman's sale of December 9-10, 1920.

Pete Smith asked for information about a picture of Matthew Stickney. Responses indicated four sources: 1) hard-bound catalogs of the 1907 Chapman sale of the Stickney collection; 2) A card inserted in some 1907 issues of *The Numismatist*; 3) pictures included in genealogies written by Stickney; and 4) a drawing by Alan Dietz derived from these earlier drawings and included in Adams' *United States Numismatic Literature*, p. 97.

Michael Sullivan asked about O.A. Jennison and about other examples from Jennison's library. Joel Orosz provided a brief biography of Jennison but no new leads on his library.

Sullivan also asked about Johnson reprints of the *American Journal of Numismatics*. He wondered which issues of AJN were reprinted.

Publications Announced

John Adams' *Indian Peace Medals or His Majesties Sometimes Allies* is now available from George Kolbe. He can be reached at Numislit@compuserve.com.

Georges Depeyrot announced publication of *Les Monnaies Hellenistiques de Marseilles*. His e-mail address is Georges.Depeyrot@ehess.fr.

Depeyrot also announced publication of *Inventory of Coin Finds in Armenia* by Khatchatur Mousheghian, Anahit Mousheghian and Georges Depeyrot.

David Ganz' book *The Official Guide to U.S. Commemorative Coins* is now available from Bonus Books at \$13.95.

Vedams Books International announced publication of *A Macro Study of Early Indian Coins*. Their address is vedams@vedamsbooks.com.

ANA Exhibits

NBS President Michael Sullivan lamented the cost and time required for an ANA exhibit. "The real issue is that ANA is too restrictive relative to display placement. Last year's ANA in Portland required me to leave for the convention about 2 days earlier than required to place my display at a personal cost of about \$300. This is a lot of 'cost' to incur for the restrictions. If the ANA becomes more progressive and expands the time slot options, more displays will be

placed."

E-Sylum editor Wayne Homren responded. "As a past exhibitor myself, I have to agree with Michael's point. Although the main reason for my not displaying this year was my plan to bring my family along, I run into the same problem each year. It's an expensive proposition to attend an extra day or two, especially when the use of precious vacation days is taken into account. My hat is off to the dedicated souls who devote the bulk of the week to attending the convention."

ANA Chief Judge Joe Boling responded. "Two days earlier than what? ANA only requires that the exhibit be in place on the morning that the convention opens (and stay in place until it closes). Even if a person is planning to only attend three days of the convention, s/he can still use the surrogate installation/removal provisions by appointing an agent. I know, this is clumsy, but it is an option, and we have had a best-of-show winner (YN division) who never attended the convention at all."

The 1999 exhibit winner in the Numismatic Literature class went to Lawrence Sekulich for "A Bibliographic Introduction to Collecting Ancient Greek Coins." It was the only exhibit in the class.

Report from ANA Convention

The NBS general meeting was on Friday, August 13, 1999, with about 40 people attending. ANA Librarian Nawana Briten-

riker reported on book preservation. She described the efforts and \$600 cost required to restore a copy of A. M. Smith's Visitor's Guide to the U.S. Mint. She did not mention that a copy in normal state of preservation can usually be bought for around \$75. She did justify the expense reporting the funds were donated by the Women in Numismatics (WIN) specifically for that book.

ANS Executive Director, Dr. Ute Wartenberg, showed plans for the new ANS building in New York City. The final speaker was John Burns who told some of his experiences visiting numismatic libraries and his appreciation for others in the hobby.

NBS Awards

The 1998 NBS writer's award was presented to Randolph Zander for his series of articles on the history of the hobby.

The Great Debate

The Fall 1999 issue of *The Asylum* included Joel Orosz' report on "The Great Debate" between Dr. Theodore V. Buttrey and Michael Hodder at the 1999 ANA Convention in Chicago. The E-Sylum had early reactions including some from those whose opinions were not influenced by attendance at the event.

Angel Pietri commented, "I have read Mr. Buttrey's article and all the recent articles in *Coin World*. To call his research 'superficial' amounts in my opinion to flattery. His article is sheer speculation based on his dislike of John Ford. I cannot describe

his evidence as weak because he simply presented no evidence."

James Spillman also commented, "I went back and reread Buttrey's original paper in *AJN* 9 and – in light of the current discussions – I wonder exactly what it was Buttrey was thinking/writing about – his illustrations were gold assay strips (bars), but he simply referred to his subject as False American Gold Bars or simply 'gold bars.' Nowhere does he seem to recognize the purpose or usage for the strips. Assay strips are considerably different from bullion gold bars, or gold coinage. I suppose that I must reread Buttrey's paper several more times before I can sort out all of his thinking; it is not well written."

ANA Education Director Gail Baker reported that tapes of the "Great Debate" could be borrowed from the ANA library or purchased for \$50.

Katen Update

Frank Katen was reported to have retired to a nursing home. John Huffman reported in late August, "I saw Laurese last Tuesday, and she told me Frank was much improved, is eating well, walking around the nursing home with the help of a cane, and is complaining about too many bosses. She was hopeful he would come home in a week or two."

Deaths Noted

Wayne Anderson, founder of the Conder Token Collectors Club, died June 30, 1999, at the

age of 58. He had an extensive numismatic library as well as books related to his collections of guns, knives, marbles and metal toys.

Numismatic Trivia Question

E. Tomlinson Fort recently moved "The Fort Memorial Numismatic Library" and commented that he was shopping for busts of Roman Emperors to put atop the shelves. This is not an original idea and The E-Sylum asked who was the famous source for this concept.

In a later edition, Wayne had the answer. Sir Robert Cotton (1571-1631) had his bookshelves topped with emperors. His library was the nucleus of the British Library. [*Editor's Note:* The imperial busts formed the basis of the catalog of Sir Robert's library. For example, the *Beowulf* manuscript is Cotton Vitellius A. XV – the bookcase under the bust of the emperor Vitellius, first shelf down, 15th book from the left. Frankly I think this system is much more elegant than either the Dewey Decimal or Library of Congress systems.] In addition to his books Sir Robert was also a collector of coins. A number of specimens from his cabinets are still in the British Museum.

eBay Show Report

David Sklow reported on the eBay collectibles show in Columbus, Ohio. "Great show, great seminars and great eBay support but no people!!! If you can imagine, at the ribbon cutting there were only a few dozen

people. I was there Friday 11:00 AM, empty! Again Saturday at noon, empty!"

Appreciation

Jan Monroe expressed his thanks to David Bowers for reprinting the Warner & Brother catalog. "This catalog provided

me with the source of two obscure medals that are included in my book on state anniversary medals that had previously been a mystery (at least to me). Finding a new fact is like finding water in the desert. It gives you encouragement to go on."

The Numismatic Bibliomania Society Membership Application

YES, I hereby apply for membership in the Numismatic Bibliomania Society. I understand that I will receive the Society's quarterly journal, *The Asylum*.

Name: _____

Street: _____

City : _____ State: ____ Zip: ____

Phone: _____

My collecting interests are: _____

Membership dues are \$15.00 in North America, \$20.00 elsewhere. Members receive all copies of the current volume of *The Asylum*.

Return application with payment to:

NUMISMATIC BIBLIOMANIA SOCIETY
DAVID HIRT, SECRETARY
5911 QUINN ORCHARD ROAD
FREDERICK, MD 21701

I hereby make application for membership in the Numismatic Bibliomania Society, subject to the bylaws of the organization.

Signature of Applicant

Date

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There is no charge for the catalog—please write, fax or
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Catalogued by:

Allan Davisson, Ph.D.
Davissons Ltd.
Cold Spring, MN 56320
(Our full address)

FAX: 320-685-8636 Email: davcoin@aol.com

George Marion Klein of Vicksburg, Mississippi

by J. H. McInnis

George Marion Klein had one of the largest, and most important, collections of coins in the late 19th century, yet today he has almost been forgotten. What follows is an outline of the family and career of one of the collectors fortunate enough to own such rareties as the 1804 dollar.

George M. Klein was born in Vicksburg, Miss., on July 5, 1844. He was the first child of John Alexander Klein and Elizabeth Bartley (Day) Klein.

George Klein's ancestry on his father's side was of predominately German stock and on his mother's side mostly English. The earliest paternal ancestor known appears to have been Jacob Klein of Wartenburg, Germany. Jacob Klein's date of birth has not been determined but it appears that he came to "the Colonies" about 1768 in the company of the Prussian Baron DeKalb.

Jacob Klein enlisted as a member of the German Regiment from Maryland, serving with Baron DeKalb at the Battle of Camden. Jacob Klein is recorded as having taken the Oath of Fidelity to the State of Maryland on Feb. 2, 1777.

Jacob's death in Frederick Md., in 1785 left his widow Anna Maria (Seiler) Klein (to whom he had been married in Frederick on Jan. 13, 1767) with three small children, all born in Frederick: Peter, born 1771; Mary

Elizabeth, born 1781; and Lewis, born 15 March 1783. No information has been found concerning the birth or death of Anna Maria (Seiler) Klein.

The line of descent from Jacob Klein to George Marion Klein was via Lewis Klein (third child of Jacob) and John Alexander Klein (fourth child of Lewis). No attempt will be made here to give detailed biographies of Jacob, Lewis, or John Alexander but a few sentences concerning each will put the family into perspective.

Little has been discovered about the early years of Lewis Klein but he was married to Elizabeth Conard on May 1, 1806 in Waterford Va. Elizabeth, born April 28, 1789, was the daughter (third child) of Anthony and Mary Conard. The Conards were Quakers and there is a suggestion that some of the Kleins of that period may have been Quakers also. Lewis and Elizabeth Klein had eleven children. John Alexander Klein, born Nov. 15, 1812, was their fourth child.

John Alexander Klein and all his siblings were born in Waterford, Va. John Alexander continued to live in Waterford throughout the years of his youth but, upon reaching maturity, apparently felt that there were better opportunities to be found elsewhere. In this evaluation time proved him abundantly correct.

In 1836, at age 24, he migrated to Vicksburg, Miss. In today's United States, Mississippi is thought of in terms of a country that stretches from ocean to ocean but, in 1836, Mississippi was the "western frontier" of a country that was barely 60 years old. John Alexander Klein followed his father's trade, that of a jeweler. Among the earliest surviving business records of John Alexander's time in Vicksburg are such things as newspaper advertisements for his jewelry shop. It didn't take John Alexander Klein very long in Vicksburg to make him realize that one of the area's major needs and opportunities lay in the lumber business. Several of John Alexander's brothers also took advantage of the opportunity for investment in the Vicksburg area but that is a subject for some other essay. John Alexander Klein's father, Lewis, died in Virginia in 1837 and his mother, Elizabeth, died in Maryland in 1839. John Alexander seems to have accepted Vicksburg as his home for the remainder of his life.

By 1840, John Alexander had prospered to such an extent that he began the construction of a town home just south of Vicksburg. This home, still in existence at the time of this writing in 1999, is named "Cedar Grove". Originally, Cedar Grove was sized to the needs of a wealthy bachelor but in time, however, this bachelor found a wife. On 8 November 1842 John Alexander Klein and Elizabeth

Bartley Day were married. Elizabeth Day was born in Mansfield, Richland County, Ohio on 3 January 1826, the daughter of Sylvanus and Susan (Bartley) Day and the granddaughter of former Ohio Governor Mordecai Bartley and his wife Susan (Wells) Bartley. Although born in Ohio, Elizabeth had been raised in Vicksburg by her parents who moved there early in her life. George Marion Klein, born in Vicksburg on 5 July 1844, was the first of ten children to be born to John Alexander and Elizabeth Bartley Klein.

George's early years must have been very pleasant. The South was at peace and his parents were wealthy and socially prominent in Vicksburg. George's education in that city was what was considered appropriate for a young man likely to become principle heir to a significant fortune.

As additional children were born to the Kleins, Cedar Grove was enlarged to accomodate them. In 1852 two wings were added to the original square house. These provided space both for the enlarged family and for the more elaborate social functions that the family's position in the city required.

All this ended in 1861 when the Civil War began. George was only 17 but, as with many Southern youth, he volunteered his services. Because of his youth, he was posted to an assignment in Florida for much of the war.

In common with many wealthy young soldiers, George

brought one of the family's household slaves with him to serve as his personal valet. The wartime tales of George and "Uncle Henry," as the slave was called, might well provide a story of their own. It is sufficient to say that both George and Uncle Henry survived the war and returned to Vicksburg.

The wartime tales of John Alexander and Elizabeth Klein and her mother, Susan Bartley Day, during the siege of Vicksburg might also merit a story of their own. Elizabeth and her mother had a few privileges during the siege that most did not.

Susan Bartley Day's brother Thomas W. Bartley was married to General William T. Sherman's sister Susan. This rather distant relationship was, however, sufficient to cause the General to issue a safe-conduct pass allowing Elizabeth (again pregnant at the time) and her mother to pass out of Vicksburg through the Federal lines to a place of greater safety.

The Kleins, as with most Southerners, suffered financial losses as a result of the war but they were fortunate in that they were not "wiped out" as so many were. Lumber was still in demand and John Alexander Klein expanded his postwar investments into railroads and banking with considerable success.

Following the war, George is reported to have attended Heidelberg University in Germany. After his graduation, he returned to Vicksburg and

became associated with his father's business ventures.

On July 30, 1868 George and Louise Harrison Balfour were married at Vicksburg's Christ (Episcopal) Church by the Rev. Henry Sansom, D.D. Louise was the oldest child of Dr. William Thomas and Emma (Harrison) Balfour. The Balfours, both from old Virginia families, were also prominent in Vicksburg's social circles.

Dr. Balfour was already established as a physician prior to the war and achieved considerable esteem and respect for his treatment of the ill and wounded during the siege. Emma Balfour kept a diary during the siege that, although relatively brief, is considered to be one of the best such accounts to have survived. George Marion and Louise Harrison Klein ultimately had eleven children, all born in Vicksburg.

As stated above, George was involved in various business ventures with his father. In 1870 The Mississippi Valley Bank opened for business with John Alexander Klein as president and George Marion Klein as cashier. It has been reported that the Mississippi Valley Bank was not only the largest financial institution in Vicksburg but was probably the largest bank in the state at the time.

John Alexander retired in 1881 due to ill health and died in 1884. On his father's retirement, George became President of the bank. The bank prospered until 1883 when poor investments caused it to fail.

It is reported that one of the principle causes for the bank failure was speculation in grain futures. In those days there was no Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. to bail out depositors of failed banks and many people lost substantial sums. There was no indication of malfeasance on the part of the bank management but it would seem obvious that poor judgement was involved.

At any rate, George's sense of honor caused him to promise that he would personally repay all losses sustained by the public within his lifetime. He was true to this commitment and it is reported that by the time of his death, on Dec. 22, 1923, all such losses had been made good. In doing so, however, he saw the family fortunes slide downward toward what has often been referred to as "genteel poverty."

The following is quoted from a 1903 entry in the journal of R. V. Booth (whose daughter, Mamie, married William Balfour Klein, George's eldest son):

"From that time [i.e., the bank failure] the business and political influence of George M. Klein began to wane and he ceased to be a potential factor in the affairs of the city."

"He went to the country and followed the life of a farmer for many years but being wholly uneducated along that line and unfitted for agricultural pursuits, his efforts were unavailing and he returned to the city and is now where we find him, seated at his desk in an insurance office, working with all his old-time

vigor and energy in the hard effort to eke out a bare living for his rather large family."

It has not yet been determined just when George Marion Klein first became interested in numismatics but he obviously was strongly infected with the collecting bug. As a member of one of the wealthiest families in Vicksburg, George was able to indulge his numismatic interests. The size and quality that his collection ultimately reached suggests that he almost certainly spent a great deal of effort and a good number of years in its acquisition.

At its peak, his collection included many valuable rarities. Not least of these rarities was the "Davis" specimen of the United States 1804 silver dollar which he purchased in 1883 from dealer John W. Haseltine for the then princely sum of \$1,200.

Unfortunately, he was only able to enjoy this particular rarity for a few years. This now-forgotten but fabulous collection was sold in a series of four auctions in 1888 and 1889. The four sections of the sale were all cataloged by W. Elliot Woodward and the actual sales were conducted by "Messrs. Bangs & Co." of 739 and 741 Broadway, New York City (see bibliography for sale dates).

The author has not yet been able to gain access to the actual catalogs but the title page of the first sale, which included the U.S. Coins, states: "No collection surpassing this has appeared since the famous Mickley sale of 1857, and in some of its special-

ties it is hardly equalled by any collection in Europe or elsewhere. "

Although no specific financial records survive which prove just how big a part the sale of his coin collection played in the restitution of losses from the failure of the Mississippi Valley Bank, the timing of the sale leaves little doubt that it was intended to play some part.

As a collector, your author can feel some of the regrets that would be engendered by having to part with one's coins under circumstances such as these. Also, one cannot but wish that the collection could have been kept within the family and passed down through the generations. It would have been nice to be able to own a coin or two from an ancestor's collection such as this – an 1804 dollar, for example.

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The Author:

Jordan Hugh McInnis (Jr.), is the great-grandson of George Marion Klein. The line of descent is via William Balfour Klein (first child of George) and Elizabeth Balfour Klein (second child of William Balfour). Elizabeth Balfour Klein married Jordan Hugh McInnis, Sr. J.H. McInnis is a retired Electronics Engineer, "does genealogy" as one of his hobbies, he also collects the coinage of Scotland.

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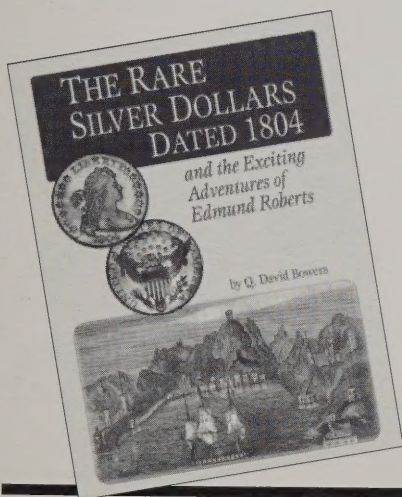
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